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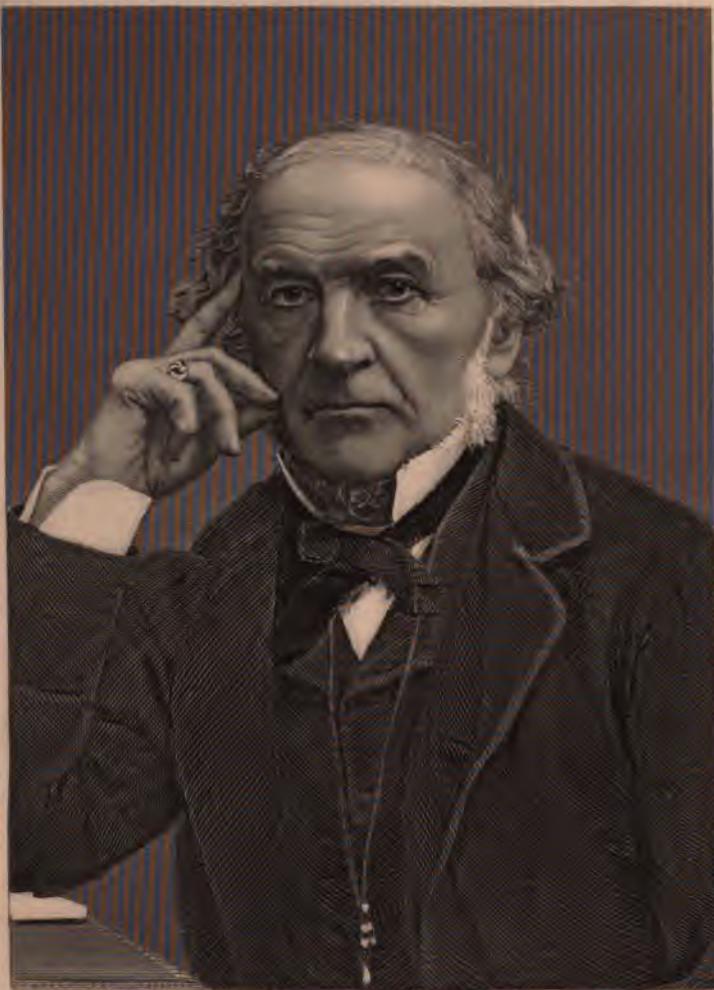
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*W. H. Weston*  
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*From a Photograph by M<sup>rs</sup> Elliott & Fry  
taken in May 1879.*

A

# DIARY

OR

# TWO PARLIAMENTS.

BY

HENRY W. LUCY.

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THE GLADSTONE PARLIAMENT.

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1880-1885.

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CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED:  
*LONDON, PARIS, NEW YORK & MELBOURNE.*

1886.

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To

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY,

"WITHOUT WHOSE LIFE IT HAD NOT BEEN,"

This Second Volume

is

DEDICATED,

AS WAS THE FIRST.



## PREFACE.

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THE unanimity of the flattering reception the First Volume of this work received not only in England but in the United States and Australia, was, in some instances, varied by complaint that the Diary, as a record of events in Parliament, was incomplete, omitting reference to some events and dealing only with episodes of others. That is quite true, and the intention of the work did not go beyond the plan carried out. To give a faithful and complete record of everything that took place in Parliament from 1874 to 1880 would require more volumes than the public would care to read. My object was to jot down descriptions of the more remarkable scenes of a Session, not to record its progress day by day.

Nevertheless I recognise the added value of a consecutive narrative, and have met the difficulty by appending to each Session a succinct diary that shows upon what business the House was engaged, and gives the result of every division. For this I am indebted to Mr. Vacher, who kindly permits me to

borrow the Calendar which adds to the usefulness of his admirable little “Parliamentary Companion.” The present volume will supply in skeleton form the story of the life of the Gladstone Parliament from day to day, the bare bones being here and there clothed with full and minute descriptions of memorable episodes and notable men.

It had been my intention to continue this record through succeeding Parliaments; but circumstances have arisen which preclude the carrying out of that plan, and “The Diary of Two Parliaments” will remain a fragment in strict conformity with its title. I am fully sensible of the good fortune which has attended me in having to deal with two such momentous and distinctive Parliaments as those that will, through all history, be associated with the names of Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone.

HENRY W. LUCY.

*London, February, 1886.*

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A

## DIARY OF TWO PARLIAMENTS.

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### THE GLADSTONE PARLIAMENT,

1880—1885.

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THE circumstances under which the Disraeli Parliament was dissolved are fully described in the first volume. It was on the 8th of March, 1880, that, in a somewhat thin House, and apropos of nothing, Sir Stafford Northcote, with studied absence of emotion, made the portentous announcement that a term had been fixed to the life of that memorable Parliament. The dissolution took place on the 24th of March, and the Conservatives went to the poll full of faith that they would return with even increased majority, the Liberals not daring to hope for the great triumph that was in store for them.

The result of the general election was amazing. The borough elections came first, and proved to be a triumphal progress of the Liberal flag. Borough after borough, held to be Tory strongholds, capitulated; and when the election was over it was found that the Liberals had gained 282 seats against the Conservative total of 91. In the counties, though the rout was not so great, many notable victories were gained, the issue being that of 187 members of English and Welsh constituencies, 63 sent Liberal members against 124 Conservative. The net result was the return of 354 Liberals, 237 Conservatives, and 61 Home Rulers—a majority of 117 Liberals over Conservatives, and of 56 Liberals over a possible combination of Conservatives and Parnellites. Lord Beaconsfield resigned office on the 22nd of April, and on the 29th of April, the day the new Parliament met, Mr. Gladstone had succeeded in forming his Ministry.

## SESSION 1880.

### CHAPTER I.

#### SETTLING DOWN TO WORK.

Opening Day—An ancient City Privilege—The Speaker Designate—In the Lords—Election of the Speaker—Commons and Lords—Mr. Bradlaugh appears on the Scene—The Prince of Wales swears—Opposition to Mr. Bradlaugh develops—The Address.

Apr. 29.—Opening day. The tenth Parliament of Queen Victoria was summoned to meet at two o'clock, but the enthusiasm of members, new and old, outran time, and as early as one o'clock the House was already full. Members who had come early and secured seats by the usual process of ticketing them, "for greater accuracy," and doubtless in consideration of the possibility of new members not being aware of the respect due to tickets, left their hats upon their selected seats whilst they strolled about. Rows of hats, on some benches unbroken by a single interval, in this manner helped to "make a House." The same precaution was observed on the Conservative side, the beggarly array of empty hats contrasting in point of number with the profuse display on the other side, and mutely testifying to much that had happened since the House last met.

From half-past one the stream of members increased in rapidity, till the floor was literally blocked. Avoiding the crush, ex-Ministers came in quietly from behind the Speaker's chair, and were apparently in the highest possible spirits. Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Sandon, settling themselves in their new places, laughed like schoolboys whose task is done, and who see the next class called up for examination.

An ancient City privilege. At the end of the Treasury bench near the gangway sat Mr. Alderman Cotton, Mr. R. N. Fowler, and Mr. Alderman Lawrence, three of the members for the City. This seat is claimed of right on occasions like to-day, in honourable recollection of the time when the City of London gave shelter

to the five members whom Charles I. would have arrested. Mr. Hubbard, the third Conservative member for the City, was not to be lured into the enemy's camp even in observance of a custom so undoubtedly old as this. He had been fortunate enough to secure a corner seat below the gangway, and as there were many members on the look-out for one of these prized positions he remained in possession.

There was not a large muster of Irish members, and as far as the arrangements of the House make it possible they took diametrically opposed courses. Mr. O'Donnell and Mr. Finigan, ignoring so trifling a circumstance as a change in the position of English parties, returned to their old seats below the gangway, on the left of the Speaker. Major Nolan, Mr. Mitchell Henry, and half-a-dozen others crossed over with the Liberal party. From the gallery over the clock, Lord Lamington (better known to Parliamentary fame as Mr. Baillie Cochrane) surveyed the animated scene. Amongst new members recognised were Mr. Slagg, who in succeeding to Sir Thomas Bazley's constituency has also claimed the reversion of his seat; Mr. Woodall, who at the late election at Stoke succeeded to the position held by Dr. Kenealy in 1875; Mr. Broadhurst, an honourable addition to the body of working-men's representatives; Mr. Firth, who won a seat at Chelsea; and Mr. Bradlaugh, who, standing a stranger for some time after he entered, presently found an acquaintance in Mr. Macdonald, and subsequently in Mr. Labouchere.

The Speaker designate. At ten minutes to two Mr. Brand slowly made his way through the throng that now completely covered the floor. He was instantly recognised in his disguise of morning dress, with a spotted blue-and-white neckerchief, and many hands were held out to welcome him. The Speaker designate, in accordance with immemorial custom, seated himself at the corner bench below the gangway, availing himself of the rare opportunity of indicating political predilection by choosing the Liberal side. When re-elected in 1874 Mr. Brand sat on the corresponding seat on the opposite side of the House.

A few minutes after two a messenger informed the Sergeant-at-Arms of the approach of Black Rod. Captain Gosset did all that was possible to clear the passage, but succeeded only in

making a narrow lane in the crowd, through which Black Rod presently walked. He did not attempt to approach the table, where, indeed, he had no errand, there being neither mace in view nor Speaker in the chair. Mindful of the fact that the House of Commons was not yet duly constituted, Black Rod, while courteously bowing right and left, colloquially addressed hon. members as "Gentlemen!" and invited them to proceed to the House of Lords to hear the Royal Commission read. Speedily giving up the half-essayed effort to retire backward, Black Rod made the best of his way out of the House. At this stage, in the non-existence of a Speaker, Sir Erskine May presided, though without the privilege of opening his mouth. He now rose, and, taking a wand in his hand, left the House, followed by a somewhat tumultuous procession.

**In the Lords.** The scene in the House of Lords seemed all the duller by contrast with the excitement that filled the other House. Not more than a score of peers were present, and scarcely as many ladies, relatives of peers, had availed themselves of the privilege of being seated within the House. The front Ministerial bench was absolutely empty, though it was presently discovered that among the five cloaked figures on the bench before the woolsack were Lord Granville, Lord Selborne, the Duke of Argyll, Lord Northbrook, and Lord Sydney. The Commission appointing these peers to act in her Majesty's name having been read, Lord Selborne observed that the Lords Commissioners "had it in hand to let you know that as soon as the members of both Houses have been sworn the cause of her Majesty calling this Parliament will be declared." In the meantime the Lord Chancellor, in her Majesty's name, bade the gentlemen of the House of Commons repair to their own House, and there elect some proper person to be their Speaker, returning on the morrow to present such person for her Majesty's approval.

**Election of the Speaker.** The first part of this instruction was promptly obeyed. On returning to the House of Commons, Sir Thomas Acland having, in the absence of the Speaker's eye, caught Sir Erskine May's finger—in the ceremonial of to-day the clerk at the table mutely indicates with outstretched finger the member who is to speak—proceeded to propose the re-election

of Mr. Brand. This was seconded from the other side of the House, and was approved amid general cheering, though it may be noted that the question was not formally put from the table. Rising from the corner seat below the gangway, the Speaker, in an address admirably conceived and delivered with great dignity, expressed his sense of the honour for the third time done him by the House of Commons. Mr. O'Donnell having announced his full approval of the proceedings, the mover and seconder of the resolution approached the Speaker and led him to the chair. Before seating himself the Speaker repeated in a single sentence the expression of his appreciation of the honour done him ; which said, he, amid renewed cheering, resumed the position he has so long held to the advantage of the House of Commons. Lord Frederick Cavendish, as representing the Government, added to the compliments already uttered, and they were supplemented by Sir Stafford Northcote, whose personal popularity was testified to when, on rising, he was greeted with cheers not less loud from the Liberal benches than from those on which his political friends sit.

Apr. 30.—<sup>Commons and Lords.</sup> Both Houses of the new Parliament met at two o'clock. In the House of Commons the Speaker took the chair in what, having respect to the full-bottomed wig and flowing robe of his ordinary attire, may be described as the chrysalis state. He wore the shoes and silk stockings of full dress, but had donned no gown, and had no head-gear more impressive than the bob-wig familiar at the Bar. At ten minutes past two Black Rod appeared, and, with the ceremony intermitted on the previous day, "required" the attendance of "this worshipful House" in the House of Peers. The Speaker, now preceded by the mace, and followed by a considerable number of members, proceeded to the Lords, where he found the Lords Commissioners again seated on the bench before the wool-sack. Standing at the Bar, and addressing their lordships, Mr. Brand said that, in obedience to her Majesty's commands, her most faithful Commons had proceeded to the election of a Speaker, and that the choice had fallen upon himself.

"I now," he continued, "present myself at the Bar and submit myself, with all humility, for her Majesty's most gracious approbation."

The Lord Chancellor, addressing the Speaker as "Mr. Brand," "most readily confirmed" him as Speaker, whereupon the right hon. gentleman proceeded to claim for the Commons all their ancient rights and privileges. This also the Lord Chancellor (now addressing Mr. Brand as "Mr. Speaker") conceded, and the Commons withdrew.

On returning to their own House, the Speaker recited what had passed elsewhere, after which he took the oath, administered to him in the chair by Sir Erskine May. Retiring for a few minutes, he returned fully dressed in flowing gown and full-bottomed wig. In the meantime four tables had been brought in and set in order at the foot of the ordinary table which, a long time ago, Mr. Disraeli thanked Heaven stood between him and Mr. Gladstone. On these were placed copies of the New Testament, together with copies of the oath, eight on each table. Sir Erskine May then called out the Parliamentary roll in alphabetical order of counties, beginning with Bedford, and so bringing Mr. Whitbread early on the scene. Members were thus sworn in batches of thirty till Nottinghamshire was reached, when the formal process of selection was abandoned, and the oath was administered indiscriminately to as many as could get hold of a Bible. The ceremony, the sameness of which early began to pall on the strangers in the gallery, lasted till five o'clock, at which hour the House adjourned.

May 3. — Mr.  
Bradlaugh ap-  
pears on the  
scene.

Both Houses of Parliament met. In the House of Peers the Royal Commissioners again sat, and the Commons having been summoned, the

Lord Chancellor read the Queen's Speech. This did not, however, go beyond the customary formula, by which the necessity for "a suitable recess," consequent on the re-election of Ministers, was recognised. On returning to their own House the Commons proceeded with the ceremony of taking the oath and subscribing the roll. After two or three batches had been disposed of in the ordinary way, Mr. Bradlaugh advanced to the table and handed Sir Erskine May a document. The Clerk, standing by the Speaker's chair, said that he had to report that the hon. member for Northampton claimed the right to make affirmation, instead of taking the oath. The Speaker having called upon him to make any statement he desired,

Mr. Bradlaugh, standing in the place of the Prime Minister, submitted that the Parliamentary Oaths Act, 1866, gave the right to affirm to any person permitted by the law to make affirmation. "I am such person," Mr. Bradlaugh added, "and I am ready to make the declaration or affirmation of allegiance."

Mr. Bradlaugh having, by direction of the Speaker, withdrawn, the right hon. gentleman, addressing the House, said he had not considered himself justified in determining this claim, having grave doubts of the construction placed on the meaning of the Act by Mr. Bradlaugh. He therefore left it in the hands of the House. Lord F. Cavendish moved that a Select Committee be appointed in pursuance of the precedent of 1833 and 1850, to consider the matter and report. The Committee, he added, would sit during the recess. Sir Stafford Northcote seconded the motion.

Some disposition towards delay was shown by members below the gangway on the Opposition benches, notably by Earl Percy and Mr. Guildford Onslow, who moved and seconded the adjournment of the debate. Sir Charles Dilke (who, making his first speech from the Treasury Bench, was loudly cheered by the Ministerialists) pointed out that no principle was involved in the motion, the question merely being whether the difficulty raised should be considered and settled. Mr. Beresford Hope complained that "a mine had been sprung upon them whilst as yet they were only half-hatched chickens." Nevertheless, he recommended that the amendment should not be pressed, and it was eventually negatived without a division. The motion for the Committee was then agreed to.

The Prince of Wales swears. The House of Lords sat at four o'clock, when a score or so of peers took the oath. In the second batch was the Archbishop of Canterbury. The proceedings were not of a lively or exciting character, and were in no respect varied by the arrival of the Prince of Wales, who shortly after half-past four appeared, in company with the Duke of Connaught. Their Royal Highnesses having taken the oath at the table, were, in usual form, introduced to the Lord Chancellor, who shook hands with them, and they straightway left the House, the ceremony not occupying three minutes. The House was almost absolutely empty, the noble lords

earlier sworn in having gone away as soon as they had accomplished their business.

May 11.—Opposition to Mr. Bradlaugh develops.

A crowded assembly in anticipation of a debate on the claim of Mr. Bradlaugh. Most of the ex-Ministers were present, with the conspicuous exception of Sir Stafford Northcote.

Lord Richard Grosvenor having moved to nominate the Committee to consider the claim of Mr. Bradlaugh to make affirmation instead of taking the oath, Sir Henry Wolff objected on the ground that it was against all precedent to consider matter of a controversial character before the Queen's Speech had been read. He concluded by moving the previous question. The Attorney-General pointed out that the terms of the Message from the Throne, delivered when Parliament met, were to the effect that the members should return to their own House and take the oath of allegiance. In pursuance of that instruction a question had been raised in the case of Mr. Bradlaugh, and it was that which they were now called upon to settle. Mr. Stanley Leighton seconded the amendment in a somewhat remarkable speech, the object of which was to show that Mr. Gladstone was at the bottom of the whole business. By the instructions of the Prime Minister, conveyed through his confidential agent, Mr. Adam, "poor Mr. Wright, a thorough-going Liberal, who came forward as a candidate for Northampton, had been hustled on one side, and the ground made clear for Mr. Bradlaugh." The whole matter was a bargain, and Mr. Bradlaugh now simply asked the Prime Minister to fulfil his part of it. The question was a sham, a snare, and a trap for the reputation of the House, and the hon. gentleman besought "the Constitutional" party (whom in the heat of the moment he addressed as "gentlemen") not to put their necks into it, for Mr. Gladstone or one of his agents was sure to pull the string and throttle them.

This speech, delivered with much fervour, raised some cheering on the Conservative side, and met with considerable laughter from the Ministerial benches. Sir John Holker, whilst taking objection to the wide terms of the resolution, was not prepared to oppose it, and advised Sir Henry Wolff to withdraw his amendment. Thus deserted by their leaders

(Sir Stafford Northcote having, as the Attorney-General reminded the House, seconded the resolution for the Committee), the opposition virtually collapsed. It was nevertheless maintained through a further succession of speeches, one of which was contributed by Mr. O'Donnell, who opposed the motion, and thereby won the unwonted tribute of Conservative cheers. On a division the previous question was rejected.

A large number of the ex-Ministers who were present avoided the division by leaving the House when it was called on. The Committee was thereupon agreed to, and the House adjourned till Thursday week.

May 20.—*The* In the House of Commons members assembled as *Address*, early as noon, with the object of securing seats. At two the Speaker took the chair, at which time the House, with the exception of the front benches, was crowded. After prayer, Mr. Bradlaugh entered and seated himself on one of the benches under the gallery, a position open only to duly elected members, though not strictly within the House. At ten minutes past two Black Rod appeared, and, advancing up the floor, still encumbered with tables containing copies of the Bible, desired the attendance of members in the other House to hear the Speech read. In the House of Lords only a score of peers and one bishop thought it worth while to be present at the reading of the Speech. The Speech having been read, Mr. Speaker, the mace, and the throng of members of the House of Commons who had accompanied him retired, and in both Houses the sitting was suspended.

At four o'clock the Speaker again took the chair in the House of Commons, and some time was occupied by swearing-in. A batch of about thirty members taking the oath, Mr. Parnell and Mr. Rowland Winn happened to meet at the table. Afterwards came Lord Hartington, who had the oath administered to him singly, and who was loudly cheered on advancing to the table. Mr. Bright came next, making that affirmation which Mr. Bradlaugh claimed as his right. He was followed by Mr. Childers, Mr. Forster, and Mr. Osborne Morgan, who took their seats on re-election after appointment to Ministerial offices.

Whilst the attention of the House was thus occupied Mr. Gladstone entered and stood among the throng behind the Bar.

Lord Hartington and Sir Thomas Colebrooke ranking themselves at his side, he presently advanced, walking towards the table amidst prolonged cheers from the Ministerialists. The uproar was so great that Mr. Gladstone apparently could not hear the formula of the oath recited by Sir Erskine May, and it was consequently repeated. The Premier's advances through the various stages of taking the oath, signing the roll, and introduction to the Speaker, were severally hailed with ringing cheers.

The section of Irish members who follow Mr. Parnell have formally seated themselves below the gangway on the Conservative side. From this position Mr. O'Connor Power gave notice of an amendment to the Address demanding the immediate dealing with the Irish land question, and Mr. Parnell gave notice of his intention to call attention to the Parliamentary relations between England and Ireland, and move a resolution.

After this the Speech from the Throne was read, and Mr. Grey rose to move the Address in reply, which was seconded by Mr. Hugh Mason. Sir Stafford Northeote, on rising, was received with cheers from the Opposition. Speaking in a subdued manner, he took, on the whole, a favourable view of the Queen's Speech, which, amid laughter from the Ministerialists, he recognised as indicative of an intention on the part of the Government to carry out the policy they had criticised whilst in Opposition. In respect to the decision not to renew the Coercion Acts, he left the responsibility with the Government, whilst darkly hinting that the course was open to many objections. Mr. O'Connor Power rising next, and moving an amendment, the House began to empty, and was in this depleted condition when, at half-past six, Mr. Gladstone rose. The loud cheers with which the half-empty benches behind greeted him gave a signal that was carried through all the vestibules, and presently members trooped in, filling all the available seats. Alluding to Lord Beaconsfield's statement on the eve of the dissolution that Europe was in a critical state, he emphatically declared that there were no developed differences of opinion on the part of the Great Powers indicative of approaching conflict.

At eleven o'clock the House divided, when the amendment found 47 supporters against 300. The Address was then agreed to.

## CHAPTER II.

### MR. BRADLAUGH : HIS ENTRANCES AND HIS EXITS.

The Bradlaugh Cloud bursts—Sir Stafford Northcote converted—The great Hat Question—Lord Randolph Churchill interposes in the Bradlaugh Debate—A noble Orangeman—Mr. Bradlaugh again—More Room—Mr. Warton presents himself—Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington—Mr. Gladstone's last Budget.

May 21. — The Bradlaugh cloud bursts. The Speaker took the chair at four o'clock, the crowded appearance of the House, unusual at this hour, appearing to indicate expectation of a moving event. There was not long to wait before the anticipation was realised. The Speaker, in accordance with the usual formula, invited members desiring to take the oath to come forward. Thereupon Mr. Bradlaugh, who had been standing by the Bar, advanced. As he moved in the direction of the table there were heard some cries of horror from the Opposition side. One or two members rose and began to address the Speaker. Sir Henry Wolff, standing well out on the floor of the House, as if he were prepared as a last resource physically to contest the passage of Mr. Bradlaugh, shouted "I object!" From the other side Mr. Dillwyn rose to order, the two members confronting each other across the floor of the House. The storm was stilled by the voice of the Speaker explaining that the House was in the ordinary course engaged in administering the oath of allegiance, and if any member had anything to say, now was the time to speak. Thus authorised, Sir Henry Wolff, amid stormy cheers from the Opposition, said, "I oppose the administration of the oath to the hon. member for Northampton."

In the meantime, Mr. Bradlaugh had been standing at the table at the corner of which Sir Erskine May met him in the usual form, holding the printed form of the oath in his hand ready to administer it. The Speaker called upon the hon. member for Northampton to "withdraw for the present," which he was about to do, when Mr. Dillwyn succeeded in making his point of order. This was to ask whether a member could interpose when another member offered himself to take the oath.

The Speaker answered, in guarded language, that he knew of no precedent for a member offering to take the oath having been met by the interposition of another member. At the same time, if Sir Henry Wolff had any observation to offer, the Speaker would consider it his duty not to interpose. Thereupon Mr. Bradlaugh withdrew, having made no remark since he crossed the Bar.

Sir Henry Wolff, who on rising again was interrupted by cries of "Move, move," and encouraged by cheers from the Opposition, disclaimed any intention of making the matter a party question. He raised the objection simply on the ground that Mr. Bradlaugh was an atheist, and that by the Common Law of England an atheist was not competent to take an oath. If that were not sufficient, he objected to him as the author of a pamphlet, entitled "The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick." Both these arraignments were loudly cheered by the Opposition; but there was general laughter when Sir Henry, arguing that this was a particular case differing from others that had been cited, observed that when claims to be relieved from the necessity of taking the oath had previously been urged, they were put in by men "who had a general belief in some divinity or other." He concluded by moving a resolution to the effect that Mr. Bradlaugh be not allowed to take the oath. This was seconded by Mr. R. N. Fowler, who implored the House not to admit an atheist within its walls.

Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Gladstone rose together. The Premier, taking precedence, argued that the question before them was one that had to be judged strictly in a judicial sense, and that no considerations of polities or religion might enter. The case was absolutely new. Mr. Bradlaugh having been elected for Northampton, had presented himself at the table with the intention of doing nothing more or less than exactly that which the Constitution prescribed. Objection had been raised, and, as a safer and better mode of dealing with the question than casting it on the House for debate, he suggested that it should be referred to a Select Committee. This proposal was received with cries of "Oh, oh!" from the Opposition benches, disregarding which the Premier concluded by moving, as an amendment to Sir Henry Wolff's motion, that the case be referred to a Select Committee, with instructions to consider and report whether the

House had any right, founded upon precedent or otherwise, by a resolution to prevent a duly elected member who is willing to take the oath from so doing.

Mr. MacIver and Mr. Gibson, ex-Attorney-General for Ireland, rose together. The former gentleman, who was received with loud laughter, said he "begged to move a further amendment." Mr. Gibson, ignoring the existence of the hon. member, proceeded with his speech, at the outset of which he complained that the terms of the amendment omitted mention of every circumstance of the case except those that would ensure a particular finding. Mr. Bradlaugh, he observed, might have gone up to the table and taken the oath without calling down notice upon himself. But he had thrust the difficulty upon the House by claiming to make affirmation, and by that claim he must stand or fall. Mr. Gibson concluded without stating what course he himself was prepared to adopt, a weakness which the Attorney-General, who followed, seized and commented upon. The House, if it followed the recommendations of gentlemen opposite, would, the Attorney-General said, be trying Mr. Bradlaugh as an atheist and condemning him as an atheist. But where was the proof that an atheist might not sit in that House? This was a question that could best be sifted before a Select Committee. If the terms of reference to the Committee were not sufficiently wide, he invited suggestions from gentlemen opposite, which he said would be cordially considered.

Sir Stafford  
Northcote con-  
verted.

Sir Stafford Northcote supplied the omission from the speech of Mr. Gibson, by stating that he intended to support Sir H. Wolff's motion.

The House, he presumed, would not relegate the right of ultimate decision to a Select Committee. The House was now in a position in which it must come to a decision, and he failed to see in what way the appointment of the Committee could assist it. Mr. Labouchere drily observed that when the electors of Northampton selected Mr. Bradlaugh as one of their representatives they did not make inquiry into his religious convictions, believing that when they sent him to the House of Commons he would be filling a political rather than a theological position.

Mr. Bright, who was received with loud cheers from the Ministerial benches, observed that, while they all deplored the

opinions of Mr. Bradlaugh, they would agree that if there was one thing more than another inculcated by the Christian religion, it was that they should, as far as they could, act with perfect justice. On that side of the House they were prepared to discuss the matter as one of right and law. He thought it was a pity the inquisition had been opened ; but since it was so, it must be settled. If the House took the advice of Sir H. Wolff, supported by the converted opinion of Sir Stafford Northeote, they would launch themselves upon a sea of trouble. They would find themselves in conflict with a great constituency, much after the manner a former Parliament did, in the case of Wilkes ; and he did not doubt that similar results would follow. Would it not be better to take the advice of Mr. Gladstone, whose devotion to the cause of the Christian faith was at least not less than that of some of the gentlemen opposite ?

Mr. Bright resumed his seat amid prolonged cheering from Ministerialists, and was followed by Mr. Grantham, whose advice the House would gladly have foregone. He was met by loud cries of "Divide !" and "Agreed !" while he perforce stood silent amid the uproar. When it was found that he was determined to speak, the House rapidly emptied, and he continued, amid interruption, to speak for about ten minutes. Mr. Walter asked permission, not easily gained in the impatient state of the House, to state his view that the only conclusive settlement of the question would be by abolishing the oath, and introducing a form of affirmation which all men could take. Mr. O'Donnell brought a long speech to a conclusion by moving the adjournment of the debate, a course to which Mr. Gladstone offered no objection, observing that the matter should not be settled without the fullest deliberation. It was now seven o'clock, and the House set itself with diminished vigour to the ordinary business.

May 24. — The At half-past four, when public business com-  
great hat menced, the House was crowded in every part.  
question. Members unable to find seats stood in a dense  
throng at the bar, whilst others filled the gallery on each side.  
The attendance of strangers was, as it has been since Parliament  
opened, such as to strain the accommodation of the gallery.

Noble lords shared the common curiosity, overflowing the seats allotted to them in the front gallery over the clock. An unprecedented indication of the pressure was furnished soon after the house met. Mr. Mitchell Henry, rising from the gallery to the right of the Speaker, created a profound sensation by addressing the Speaker from this position, a course unusual, though not unprecedented. This was an effective means of adding to the force of the notice of his intention to ask the Prime Minister whether anything could be done in relation to the crowded and uncomfortable position of the House. Later Mr. Serjeant Simon made a pathetic appeal to the Speaker on the same subject. He stated, amid unsympathetic laughter, that having entered the House as early as half-past twelve, he found a row of hats on the best benches, the members who had thus early appropriated them making themselves comfortable in other parts of the House, in the certainty of having secured a seat for the evening. He wanted to know if the Speaker could not do something to assist members who had not this wealth of time at their disposal. The Speaker said he had no authority in the matter, but the question would probably be submitted to the House by the notice given by Mr. Mitchell Henry.

Lord Randolph Churchill interposes in the Bradlaugh debate.

The debate on the question raised by Mr. Bradlaugh's offering to take the Parliamentary oath was resumed by Lord Randolph Churchill, who in a vigorous speech supported the proposal before the House in the resolution of Sir Henry Wolff, that the oath should be refused to the member for Northampton. He illustrated his argument by reading an extract from a pamphlet purporting to be written by Mr. Bradlaugh. When he had made an end of reading he indignantly cast the pamphlet on the floor, a dramatic gesture greeted with loud laughter from the Ministerial benches.

Mr. Watkin Williams suggested further variations in the reference of the case to a Select Committee, a proposal which on the whole he supported. His speech was frequently interrupted by cries of "Order, order!" as new members, ignorant of the etiquette of debate, innocently passed to and fro between the member in possession of the House and the Chair. The situation was considerably aggravated by the total unconcern of

the gentlemen denounced, who went on their way without the slightest conception that it was they against whom the loud and angry cries of “Order, order!” were levelled. Mr. Thorold Rogers supported the amendment, whilst protesting that he had no sympathy either with Mr. Bradlaugh’s atheistical opinions or his polities. His own knowledge of history had shown him that atheists were invariably Tories, and he cited the cases in point of Hobbes, Hume, and Gibbon. He appealed to hon. gentlemen opposite, by the memory of their fox-hunting days, to “give a little law to vermin,” a quotation which the Speaker, taking literally, called upon him to withdraw. Mr. Rogers explained that he had merely used the phrase as an illustration, and had not the slightest intention of applying it to Mr. Bradlaugh.

The debate was continued by Sir John Mowbray, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Beresford Hope, Dr. Lyons, Mr. Hopwood, Sir H. Tyler—who was ruled out of order when he proposed to read choice extracts from a collection of fourteen pamphlets, purporting to be written by Mr. Bradlaugh—Mr. Hubbard, and Mr. Willis who, starting with the proposition that “it is essential that this question should be treated in a calm and judicial manner,” twice with sweeping gesture knocked off the hat of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, who sat on the bench below, attentive on his fervid eloquence.

Shortly after eleven o’clock the Solicitor-General interposed, and re-stated in plain and convincing language the issue before the House, which was not one on the merits of Mr. Bradlaugh’s claim, but on the justice and general desirability of referring the whole matter to a Select Committee before the House itself came to a decision. The level flow of the learned gentleman’s speech was varied by constant interruptions from members opposite. Sir Hardinge Giffard having supported the resolution, Mr. MacIver at length found an opportunity of making his speech, which met with a chilling reception, being, in fact, ejaculated amid continuous cries for the division. He concluded by moving the adjournment. This was resisted by Mr. Gladstone, and discomfited by Sir Stafford Northcote. Sir H. Wolff’s motion was at one o’clock in the morning put and rejected, and the debate adjourned. The result was received with cheers and counter-cheers.

May 25.—A noble Orangeman. In the House of Lords some conversation, initiated by Lord Oranmore and Browne, arose on the appointment of the Marquis of Ripon as Governor-General of India, the noble lord taking exception to the appointment, on the ground that Lord Ripon is a Roman Catholic. Lord Granville thought the question was not one that would commend itself to either side of the House, and after a few words from Lord Napier of Ettrick and Lord Northbrook, the subject dropped.

Mr. Bradlaugh again. On the nomination by Mr. Gladstone of the Committee on the Bradlaugh case, a prolonged and animated conversation arose. Lord Randolph Churchill commenced it by taking exception to the undue preponderance of legal gentlemen on the Committee, the question, as he said, being rather of a constitutional character. He specifically complained that there were on the Committee only two Nonconformists, one Catholic, and (above all) no Scotchmen. Sir Henry Wolff moved the adjournment of the debate, a proposal seconded by Sir Baldwyn Leighton. Mr. Gladstone resisted the motion, and defended the composition of the Committee. Sir Stafford Northcote did not see any good that could come from adjourning the debate, but thought the Committee might be advantageously enlarged.

On a division being called Sir Stafford Northcote hastily left the House—a proceeding later followed by Lord Sandon, Mr. W. H. Smith, and Mr. Rowland Winn. This retreat was effected amid ironical cheering from the Ministerialists. Many Conservatives, taking a more decided view of their duty under the circumstances, voted against the motion, which was rejected by 256 votes against 100. The Committee was then agreed to.

May 27.—More room. Mr. Mitchell Henry observed that, by the courtesy of Mr. Rylands (who was in the meantime sitting on the floor), he was able to address the House from a place other than the gallery, now asked a question of which he had given notice—whether the Government would consider the propriety of carrying out the recommendations of the Committee of 1868, by the erection of a new chamber in the Commons court. Mr. Gladstone suggested that it would be well to wait till relief

came by reason of the diminution of curiosity and interest on the part of new members, which now, as in 1869, tended to make the House unduly crowded.

June 2.—<sup>Mr. Warton presents himself.</sup> Mr. A. Dilke moved the second reading of a Bill designed to extend to boroughs throughout the country the hours of polling recently established in London, and which leave the poll open until 8 o'clock at night. Perhaps the only determined opposition came from Mr. Warton, who loudly declared that he was "ashamed that the whole framework of the Constitution, so to speak," should be altered to suit the convenience of the working man rather than that the working man should be called upon to exercise the self-denial necessary in order to find time to record his vote.

June 3.—<sup>Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington.</sup> It has been stated that when Mr. Gladstone accepted the leadership of the House of Commons it was on the understanding that he was to be spared the labour of the position, which was to devolve on Lord Hartington. The conjecture has been emphatically disproved by both of the gentlemen named. Lord Hartington is making the most of his emancipation. He is very rarely seen in the House, a circumstance which is, of course, probably accountable for by seasonable prevalence of attractions elsewhere. A question was the other night placed on the paper addressed to him, but when it was called on he was absent. He came in a quarter of an hour later, and with the frankness which endears him to every one explained that he really had not known that the public business commenced now at a quarter-past four instead of half-past, an admission which, whatever might have been his accidental state of ignorance, it is probable no other Minister would have dared to make.

But if Lord Hartington is frequently absent Mr. Gladstone is always here. He is in his place early and leaves late, a habit wherein a parallel might be found in the case of Mr. Disraeli when leader of the House. But the Premier is not content with sitting and looking on. Now, as in the Ministry of 1868, he pervades every department, comes to the front in every controversy, and even, when he permits an Under-Secretary to take on himself the duty of replying, comes in at the finish with a

prodigious speech. On Tuesday night he made no less than six speeches, fronting the Opposition on every question raised throughout a long night's sitting.

June 10. — Mr. Gladstone's last Budget. Since the day when a great Tory statesman dished the Whigs there has been no such scene in the House of Commons as happened to-night, when a greater Liberal statesman dished the Tories. The surprise was complete and dramatic. In the many conjectures as to the direction in which Mr. Gladstone had turned his attention when projecting his Budget, it is true that the malt tax was faintly named. But so also were various other imposts which it was possible to deal with. Friendly Ministers entrusted with Cabinet secrets were communicative up to a certain point, but beyond this all was dark. If there was anything like a concensus of conjecture it pointed to something being done in connection with the Indian deficit. There was a dim but sufficiently well defined idea that taxation would be increased. But it was thought Mr. Gladstone, heroically, and even quixotically, carrying out the principles of sound finance advocated by him whilst in Opposition, was about to revive perishing India at the expense of the English taxpayer.

Members thus met at four o'clock without any suspicion that before midnight sounded the malt tax would be abolished. The House was crowded in every part, members competing for seats even in the long gallery facing the Treasury Bench. Presently every foot of space was occupied here, and late comers were fain to take up a less advantageous position in the gallery at the back of the orator. Strangers flooded the gallery as soon as the doors were open, and all night St. Stephen's Hall and the Octagon Hall were thronged with people waiting for the remote chance of somehow or other getting within sound of the Premier's voice. About a score of peers, resisting the counter attractions of their own House, appeared in the gallery over the clock. As soon as business rendered it practicable, Earl Granville arrived, joining the Duke of Argyll and Lord Aberdare, who had come in early. Later still Lord Sherbrooke manifested undiminished interest in budgets by entering the gallery, where he remained an attentive listener. In the gallery set apart for the accommodation of Westminster schoolboys, and

even more distinguished personages, were the Ambassadors of France and Spain.

It was half-past five before Mr. Gladstone found his opportunity, his pale face flushing at the sound of the cheers that welcomed him back in his old rôle of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Lowe introduced the wholesome custom of making his Budget statement brief. Mr. Disraeli, in strict emulation of a similar feat on the part of his great rival, once took five hours to expound his Budget. It was a very bad Budget, and even a worse speech, for the gentleman who is now Lord Beaconsfield has never through his long life been able to maintain beyond the space of twenty minutes the level of point and polish that, in his political addresses, effectually supply the absence of stamina. Mr. Gladstone frequently took three hours for his Budget speech, and has never, within my recollection, accomplished the task under two. On the 11th March, when Sir Stafford Northcote made his last Budget speech in the memorable Parliament then on the verge of dissolution, he spoke for an hour and ten minutes. Mr. Gladstone to-night spoke for two hours by the clock, but such was the charm of his oratory, so easy was the way made for listeners, and so intent the interest, that when the audience woke from its trance to find the malt tax gone it was surprised to find that it was also half-past seven.

This speech will be found to differ from Mr. Gladstone's earlier efforts in the direction of simplicity of style. It began without an exordium, and seemed about to close without a peroration. The Premier had really finished his speech by some matter-of-fact remarks as to the time and manner of bringing in a Bill founded on the resolutions. He had put together his memoranda, and was about to sit down, when it instinctively occurred to him that this was a somewhat lame conclusion to a notable address. Accordingly, he re-embarked upon a sentence, in which he summed up his case, and, making another reference to the higher sentiment of his plan, insisted on doing justice to the agriculturist at the present time of cruel depression. It would be more correct to call this a winding-up than a peroration. It was a terribly long sentence, somewhat involved, and not very highly pitched. To tell the truth, he was disturbed at the moment by the moving scene before him. Members, having

learned all that was to be known, were already rising from all parts of the House, and entering for the race of which the *grand prix* was precedence at the telegraph office. .

In the course of his speech the Premier incidentally alluded to his having in the year 1833 heard a speech in the House on the malt tax. Listening to him to-night, observing the ease with which he manipulated the figures at his fingers' end, the vigour with which he addressed himself to elucidate dark points, and the vivacity of his playful references to Mr. Bass and Mr. Chaplin, it was hard to believe that forty-seven years ago he should have been already in harness. At the close of his speech he resumed his seat apparently as fresh as when he rose, and was greeted with prolonged cheering from the Liberal benches.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### LOCAL OPTION.

Attack on the French Ambassador—"That Mr. O'Donnell be not heard"—Sir Stafford Northcote interposes—Sir. W. Harcourt rides upon the Storm—Questions proceeding at one a.m.—Mr. Warton—Sir Wilfrid Lawson's Resolution—An exciting Division—Victory!

June 11.—Attack  
on the French  
Ambassador.

The House was to-night the scene of a display which, in respect of duration and of occasional manifestation of heat, finds no parallel even in the more famous scenes of the last Parliament. It began as usual at question time. Mr. O'Donnell, in accordance with notice, asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs "whether M. Challemel-Lacour, spoken of as future French Ambassador to England, is the Citizen Challemel-Lacour who, as one of the Prefects of the Provisional Government of September 4th, 1870, ordered the massacre of Colonel Carayon Latour's battalion in the telegram 'Fusillez-moi ces gens-la,' contained in the Report of the Commission of the National Assembly on the subject, and who has since been condemned by a court of justice in France to pay some three thousand pounds compensation for his share in the plunder of a convent during

the same period. And whether the same person was not suggested as French Ambassador at Berlin last year, but was promptly withdrawn in deference to the opinion of the German Government."

As he was about to put the question, Mr. Monk rose and appealed to the Speaker whether he was in order. The Speaker answered that Mr. O'Donnell had given notice of the question on his own responsibility. He would have been better advised had he consulted the Chair before giving his notice; at the same time he was not prepared to state that it was irregular. The question having been put, he thought it right that equal publicity should be given to the reply. Sir Charles Dilke then answered that there never was any such massacre as that alluded to in the question; that M. Challemel-Lacour denies having sent any such telegram; that the action was brought against him, not personally, but as head of the department of the Rhone, and that an appeal against the verdict was now pending before the Court of Cassation. So far from M. Challemel-Lacour having taken part in the plunder of a convent, he was at the time a prisoner. He was never accredited Ambassador to Berlin. But since this question had been put on the paper the German Government had informed the Under-Secretary that had he been nominated they would not have refused to receive him, but, on the contrary, had he been accredited to the German Court he would have been received with the utmost cordiality.

Mr. O'Donnell rising began by observing that, "it was perfectly impossible to accept the explanation of the Government," and proceeded to enlarge upon the matter, meeting the objection that he was out of order by undertaking to conclude with a motion. The Speaker, being again appealed to, said it would be an abuse of the privileges of the House that a question of this gravity should be brought forward without notice. Mr. O'Donnell, who had resumed his seat when the Speaker rose, again presented himself and proceeded to speak amid cries of "Notice, notice!"

"That Mr. O'Donnell be not heard." Mr. Gladstone, having held a hasty consultation with Sir Erskine May at the table, now interposed and moved that Mr. O'Donnell be not heard. A storm of cheering burst forth at this motion, members on the Opposition

side being especially distinguished by the enthusiasm with which they welcomed the Premier's interposition. Mr. Parnell, pale and trembling with suppressed excitement, moved the adjournment of the debate, explaining that he did so, not having the slightest sympathy with Mr. O'Donnell, but in vindication of the rules of the House and the freedom of debate.

Mr. Gladstone, desirous that there should be no confusion as to the precise point on which the House would divide, pointed out that it was not a question of freedom of speech, but of the liberty of setting at nought the rules of the House. The question was, whether a member, having put an interrogation and received an answer, was to be permitted to rise and enter upon argumentative matter. Mr. Sullivan, observing that Mr. O'Donnell was "accustomed to distinguish himself at his own peril," took the same ground that had been adopted by Mr. Parnell, and supported the amendment. Mr. Cowen, who had made several attempts to rise early in the debate, but had given way to other speakers, was now loudly called for. He warmly defended the character of M. Challemel-Lacour, and protested against a gross personal libel being published behind Parliamentary forms at the expense of a distinguished man.

Sir Stafford Northcote interposes. Hitherto the discussion, whilst sufficiently animated, had maintained a certain unvaried character. Mr. O'Donnell stood isolated in his position, the *esprit de corps* of his compatriots not sufficing to carry them beyond the lines marked down by Mr. Parnell's speech and closely followed by other members from Ireland. The leader of the Opposition now rose and gave quite a new turn to the debate. Ignoring altogether the circumstances on which the action of the Prime Minister had been based, he catechised the Speaker on two points of order. The first was whether Mr. Gladstone was in order in moving his motion whilst Mr. O'Donnell was in possession of the House; secondly, whether Mr. O'Donnell was out of order in making a speech at question time when he promised to conclude with a motion. In support of the negative of the latter question the leader of the Opposition gave what Mr. Gladstone subsequently described as "a highly garbled account" of what that right hon. gentleman had said when on the 5th March last a similar difficulty arose by the action of Mr. Hibbert.

It should be noted to the credit of Mr. Slater-Booth that he first discovered these points of order, though no response was made when he, some half an hour earlier, had submitted them. Their adoption by the leader of the Opposition gave them a new gravity, and the Speaker, answering them, dwelt upon the special impropriety of the course adopted by Mr. O'Donnell. As to the motion of the Prime Minister, he was bound to say that a motion of that kind had not been made for two hundred years. The Opposition, forgetful of the uproarious applause with which they had but an hour earlier greeted the motion, loudly cheered. The cheers were answered from the other side, when the Speaker went on to add, "neither had occasion arisen." Sir Stafford Northcote, cheered on by the Opposition, pressed the Speaker for a more distinct ruling upon the question of the legality of Mr. Gladstone's motion. But the Speaker declined to vary his reply.

Sir W. Harcourt  
rides upon the  
storm.

The Home Secretary now approached the table and began with the remark: "The leader of the Opposition, who has rendered such powerful and influential aid to the member for Dungarvan—." This proved to be the last word audible from the right hon. gentleman for the space of nearly a quarter of an hour. The cheers of the Ministerialists were angrily answered by cries of "Oh, oh!" from the Opposition. Some one called "Withdraw!" and instantly the cry was taken up till it grew to an incessant roar, which rolled to and fro from the Conservative members above the gangway to the Irish members below it, whilst Sir William Harcourt stood at the table vainly attempting to speak. Every time he opened his mouth, his words (even those which might possibly have conveyed the desired withdrawal) were drowned in a renewed shout.

At length a new member (Mr. Price, from Devonport) rose and shouted out at the top of his voice, "I move that the right hon. gentleman be not heard." This was hailed by tumultuous shouts from the Conservatives, amidst which the Home Secretary stood at the table, still vainly attempting to gain a hearing. Below the gangway Mr. Gorst hastily rose and challenged the Speaker to put the motion. The Speaker replied with dignity,

"The right honourable gentleman the Home Secretary is in possession of the House."

Thus authorised, Sir William Harcourt again attempted to speak, when Mr. Stanhope, Under-Secretary for India in the late Government, jumped up and asked whether Mr. O'Donnell was not also in possession of the House when Mr. Gladstone moved that he be no longer heard. On the other side, Sir John Lubbock rose to order—an example promiscuously followed in all quarters, until at least a dozen members were on their feet, all righteously disorderly in the cause of order. Sir William Harcourt, once more coming to the front, was greeted with renewed cries, which were only stilled by the Speaker peremptorily calling "Order!"

Comparative silence being restored Sir William Harcourt, amidst cheers from the Ministerialists, put to the leader of the Opposition the plain question, What guidance had he to propose to the House in the circumstances? Mr. O'Donnell had been guilty of a gross abuse of the forms of the House, on which the Prime Minister had moved that he be no longer heard. Mr. Parnell had then moved the adjournment of the debate. If that were carried, Mr. O'Donnell would be at liberty to proceed with his attack on the Ambassador. Did the leader of the Opposition propose to vote for the adjournment?

Sir Stafford Northcote protested that he was not responsible for the position of affairs, and could only regret that Mr. O'Donnell had not been stopped from putting a notice on the paper. Since he was asked for his guidance, all that he could advise was that the matter should be allowed to drop—a suggestion received with loud laughter on the part of the Ministerialists. Mr. Forster pointed out that Sir Stafford Northcote had not answered the question put to him by Sir William Harcourt, and was incidentally called to order by Mr. O'Donnell for observing that that gentleman had "made a speech contrary to the decencies of society." After some further conversation, Lord Hartington once more stated the question before the House, supposing by way of illustration that a member came down, and without notice attacked the Sovereign.

At eight o'clock the House divided on Mr. Parnell's motion for the adjournment, with the result that it was rejected by 245 votes against 139.

Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir Richard Cross, Lord John Manners, Sir Hardinge Giffard, Mr. W. H. Smith, Lord

Sandon, and other ex-Ministers present voted in the minority. About a score of the older Conservative members walked out. The upshot was that the members of the late Cabinet found themselves leading into the lobby a body composed of one-half Irish members and the other half Conservative, animated by this newly born enthusiasm for freedom of speech.

On the numbers being announced, Major Nolan moved the adjournment of the House, disclaiming, as all speakers had done, any sympathy with Mr. O'Donnell, but fearful to encourage this "attack on minorities." The Prime Minister made an appeal to Mr. O'Donnell to relieve the House from its difficulty by declaring that he would content himself with giving notice of the terms of his proposed resolution, when Mr. Gladstone would cheerfully withdraw his motion. Sir Stafford Northcote joined in this recommendation, which after some bargaining came to nothing, and the House again divided. This time Sir Stafford Northcote and his colleagues in the late Ministry, with the exception of Lord John Manners, deserted their new allies, who, under the command of Mr. Parnell, found themselves in a minority of 58 against 224.

Lord Elcho now rose from below the gangway on the Conservative side, and amid ironical cheering moved the alternative motion ("that the debate be now adjourned"), whereupon the debate commenced with fresh vigour, Ministers and some other gentlemen who had remained dinnerless temporarily leaving the House, whilst others who had early broken away from the altercation of the debate came back like giants refreshed. The division on this motion took place at midnight, the motion being defeated by 298 against 97. In this division Sir Stafford Northcote voted with the Government, Mr. Chaplin taking the middle course of walking out, whilst Sir Henry Wolff, Mr. Gorst, Lord Randolph Churchill, and some others voted with the Irish members. Mr. Gorst next moved the appointment of a Select Committee to "search for precedents."

Questions proceeding at one a.m.

A few minutes before one o'clock in the morning the affair suddenly collapsed, Mr. O'Donnell

giving the required pledge to lodge notice in customary form of any motion or question he might desire to bring forward. Various motions were then withdrawn, and at

one o'clock the House was at liberty to proceed with the remaining questions on the paper, of which Mr. O'Donnell's was numbered 23.

June 18. — Mr. Warton. — The last voice raised in the yet unpolled House of Commons against the Local Option resolution was Mr. Warton's. He had been sitting, as he always sits, attentive and contemplative, showing no further sign of his intention to take part in the debate than is to be found in a man's taking notes. The debate had closed, the Speaker had put the question, and members were preparing for the division, when the House suddenly became conscious of a short, strongly built man, wearing a determined aspect and a pair of shepherd's-plaid trousers, standing under the shadow of the gallery to the left of the Speaker. There was a moment's deadly silence, broken by a shout that must have frightened the pigeons in Palace-yard. Mr. Warton is no pigeon, and so far from being alarmed did not appear in the least surprised. If it had been the custom of the House of Commons thus to inaugurate the successive rising of members, Mr. Warton could not have seemed to regard the affair with completer absence of emotion.

Having a few spare moments thus placed at his disposal, Mr. Warton slowly, and with a certain air of solemnity, produced his pocket-handkerchief. Under any circumstances, this particular article of portable property was calculated to aggravate mankind. Such a combination of aggressive colour has probably never been seen since Joseph's wicked brethren stripped him of his cherished garment. It was an arrangement of blue and brown, of orange and red, of scarlet and green, of purple and of yellow ochre. At sight of this work of art, slowly shaken in its face preparatory to assistance in the sending forth of a trumpet blast, the House literally yelled as if in agony of physical pain. Paying no more heed to this outburst than he had done to the opening chorus, Mr. Warton, with much deliberation, blew his nose, and with a flourish that flashed in dazed eyes all the marvellous colours of this astounding handkerchief, he put it in his pocket again.

The pocket-handkerchief put away, he next produced a snuff-box—not a receptacle for snuff in the ordinary sense of the term,

an article that would lie in the waistcoat pocket, but a roomy box, such as might on occasions serve to carry the necessaries of a night's journey, or peradventure to accommodate itself as a portable bath. The House yelled again at sight of this; but Mr. Warton, always bearing the aspect of a man walking along a country lane, his mind at peace and the air disturbed by no sound harsher than the music of the lark, proceeded to take snuff, holding the box in one hand, to the manifest astonishment of Mr. Montagu Scott, who had been sitting underneath, and who quickly moved away, lest he should be crushed in its ruins if it fell. Mr. Warton, by the exercise of rare skill and strength, opened the lid with the other hand, and took a prodigious pinch. This he absorbed with manifest satisfaction, the roar of execration from all parts of the House increasing at this exceptional manifestation of enjoyment. Then the handkerchief, growing in terror on closer acquaintance, appeared once more, always with the same aggravatingly slow movements.

Being now fully primed, and there being no probability of surcease of the cries, it occurred to Mr. Warton that he might as well say a few words. In a voice that sounded ominously weak amid the hubbub, he observed, "Sir." But this syllable and its repetition were all that followed for fully ten minutes. Mr. Warton would not commence his speech without full acceptance of this initial word. The House would not have that word nor any other, and after a struggle of a quarter of an hour, during which he had said "Sir" oftener than Mr. Willis did in the famous speech when he twice knocked off the hat of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Warton accepted a compromise, and proceeded with the matter of his discourse. One could make out above the din that he had "two points" to make. But what they were, whether one was the snuff-box and the other the pocket-handkerchief, remains for ever hidden. For half an hour the contest raged. Mr. Warton, gradually warming to his work, with much emphatic gesture, and in a manner doubtless not lacking in argument and eloquence, explained and enforced his "two points." The House had indirectly moved that he be not heard, and heard he was not. But he made a gallant stand, and if he lost his own voice he had at least the proud consciousness that fifty others had succumbed in the unequal contest.

**Sir Wilfrid Lawson's resolution.** There was a lull after the storm, but it was only temporary. When Mr. Warton sat down, having, it appeared from that circumstance, concluded his remarks, the Speaker again put the question, and the bell rang for a division. There was a pervading consciousness that a crisis had arrived in the history of a question that has been a Parliamentary one for sixteen years. Mr. Gladstone, with keen prescience, had carefully avoided allying himself with defeat. He was not going to vote for the resolution, but he had been careful to define the precise ground of his determination—grounds on which he might stand safely whether Sir Wilfrid Lawson lost or won. There was a great muster of official Conservatism. Sir Stafford Northcote appeared to have exhausted his affectionate fealty to the licensed victuallers in his speech at Exeter, and did not show up in this final fight. But most of his colleagues in the late Ministry were there, and went out to vote against the resolution.

**An exciting division.** As members returned from the division lobby there were hurryings to and fro, whispered consultations, and anxious faces. Mr. Gladstone, who is never able to disguise his feelings, sat eagerly forward on the Treasury Bench, waiting for the result. He had furnished himself with his constant companion—a red blotting pad—and had commenced to write a letter on his knee. But he did not get beyond the superscription, and now sat on the extreme edge of the bench, with anxious face, looking down the House, awaiting the coming tellers. Lord Hartington, one of the few Ministers who had joined the Premier in opposing the resolution, was able to await the issue with considerably more calmness. Having voted, his lordship sat himself to conclude the peaceful sleep from which he had, three-quarters of an hour earlier, been awakened by the clamour which greeted the sight of Mr. Warton's pocket-handkerchief.

**Victory!** Since the tellers for the Opposition returned first, it became almost a certainty that the resolution had been carried. The more votes to tell, the longer would tarry the tellers. Presently Sir Wilfrid Lawson was seen excitedly making his way between the front Opposition Bench

and the table on his way from the lobby. On communicating his figures to the clerk the paper was forthwith handed to him. Then it was known that he had won the hard fought fight. One could hear the new members on the Ministerial benches shouting, "Lawson's got it." The cry was taken up in the crowded Strangers' Gallery, the throng there rising *en masse*, in utter disregard of the desperate gesticulations of the attendants, and when Sir Wilfrid read out the figures that proclaimed his victory there followed a scene not often witnessed in an assembly which, to whatever extent disorder may reign on the floor, is stern in repressing emotion in the galleries. The strangers took up the cheer that echoed from the floor of the House, many of them noisily clapping their hands, whilst right in the centre an excited teetotaller waved a blood red pocket-handkerchief which seemed like a section cut out of Mr. Warton's.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### MR. BRADLAUGH IMPRISONED AND RELEASED.

Mr. Bradlaugh—Motion to permit him to affirm—Second Night's Debate—The Premier speaks—The Division—More of Mr. Bradlaugh—At the Bar—At the Table—A "Stranger" in the House—Crisis—Mr. Bradlaugh and the Sergeant-at-Arms advance and retire—Arrested—Released—Reappears.

June 21.—Mr. Bradlaugh. The House crowded in every part. Noble lords, temporarily neglectful of the interests committed to their charge, filled the accommodation allotted to them. The Strangers' Gallery held but a tithe that besieged the entrance armed with orders of admission. Members not finding seats on the floor of the House thronged the galleries on either side. Amongst the early arrivals was Mr. Bradlaugh, who took his seat in his accustomed corner outside the Bar, under the gallery, where Mr. Labouchere presently had a long conversation with him.

Motion to permit him to affirm. At a quarter to six the Speaker called upon Mr. Labouchere, who proceeded to move a resolution of which he had given notice, calling upon the House to permit

Mr. Bradlaugh to make affirmation. As soon as he opened the case Mr. Bradlaugh left the House. Mr. Labouchere commenced by summarising the decision of the two Committees, which brought him to the conclusion that if they were adopted by the House Mr. Bradlaugh would, between the two, be altogether kept out, a conclusion of the business approved by a hearty cheer from the Conservative benches. Mr. Labouchere then applied himself at length to argue the legal question. He supported the contention that the fourth section of the Parliamentary Oaths Act in its simple grammatical construction was favourable to Mr. Bradlaugh's claim, and that the duty of the Speaker, as president of the House of Commons, was concluded when he was satisfied that Mr. Bradlaugh had satisfied the judges that he was a proper person to affirm.

This speech, studiously free from references calculated to aggravate feeling, was listened to attentively, but without anything in the way of demonstration. There was some incredulous laughter when he asserted that Mr. Bradlaugh was certain of re-election, and an outcry followed when he laid down the principle that "it is repugnant to the feelings of all men of tolerant mind that any gentleman should be hindered from performing functions in this world on account of speculative opinions with respect to another." This demonstration Mr. Labouchere answered by showing that at least the doctrine was not original, being set forth in a protest signed by Lord Holland, Lord Brougham, Lord Denman, and others, which now stands on the journal of the statutes of the House of Lords, in connection with the debate which took place in 1837 on the question of municipal officers taking the oath and making declaration.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Charles McLaren, after which Sir Hardinge Giffard, Solicitor-General in the late Government, moved an amendment declaring that, having regard to the reports of the two Select Committees, Mr. Bradlaugh be not permitted either to take the oath or to make affirmation.

Mr. Alderman Fowler varied the level course of legal argument by loudly denouncing Mr. Bradlaugh. But the earlier manner of the debate was promptly re-established by Mr. Serjeant Simon, who delivered an able argument in favour of the finding of the last Committee. Mr. Warton would be extremely sorry to make this a political question, and he hoped

that many religious men, "even if they were Liberals," would not vote to admit Mr. Bradlaugh, a man necessarily without a conscience and without any faculty of appreciating solemnity. "That is my hope, and," Mr. Warton added, "I may say it is my prayer." The House now almost completely emptied at sound of the dinner bell, and the debate was continued by Mr. Whitbread, General Burnaby, Mr. Hubbard, Sir H. Jackson, Mr. Beresford Hope, Mr. Hopwood, and Mr. O'Connor, who besought the Speaker, if the motion was carried, to give him and others due notice of Mr. Bradlaugh's approach, so that they might withdraw, and be spared the pain of seeing the House desecrated.

At ten o'clock, the House having partially refilled, the Attorney-General reviewed the case, supporting the motion on the ground that Mr. Bradlaugh's right was a statutory one, in which the House could not interfere if it were proved to lie with the member for Northampton. Mr. Grantham continued the debate, the House again emptying, being evidently weary of the iteration of legal argument. Those who remained indulged in a loud conversation, which nearly drowned Mr. Grantham's arguments. He was followed by Mr. Walpole, and then Mr. Bright appeared at the table, and was greeted with loud cheers from the Ministerialists.

It was now half-past eleven, and the House filled as if by magic, the benches presenting an appearance almost as crowded as they had been seven hours earlier. As Mr. Bright had filled the House with numbers so he reinforced it with the life and animation sorely lacking through the slow hours of the night. Sharply reviewing the history of the case, he vindicated Mr. Bradlaugh's right to make affirmation, declaring that he had not had dealt out to him that favourable and generous justice which the House of Commons is in the habit of according to its members. As to the denial, gravely and repeatedly made, of the existence of either honour or conscience in the possession of Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Bright warmly declared that he held that gentleman's honour and conscience to be equal to his own.

"It is no business of mine to set myself up as superior in these points to Mr. Bradlaugh. Nor," he added, with indignant gesture towards the Opposition, "is it any business of yours to

set yourselves up to have a superior quality of conscience or honour."

Speaking of the feeling on this subject in the large constituencies, he observed, "The lower classes do not care more for the dogmas of Christianity than the upper classes care for the practice of that religion." The loud, sharp cry of "Oh!" with which this aphorism was greeted from the Conservative benches gradually subsided amid something like a low groan of infinite pain and unspeakable disgust.

Mr. Stanhope, jumping up as Mr. Bright resumed his seat, was met by cries for the division; but he pleaded, amid some laughter from the Ministerialists at the conjunction of orators, that "it was necessary this very night some answer should be made to the right hon. gentleman." Mr. Stanhope having made his answer, Sir Patrick O'Brien followed, speaking amid renewed cries for the division. On the motion of Mr. Newdegate the debate was adjourned.

June 22.—Second night's debate. The inability of the Bradlaugh case to maintain its hold upon the attention of the House of Commons through two nights was strikingly demonstrated by the appearance of the House this afternoon. So far from being unduly crowded the House was scarcely as full as on ordinary occasions. When at a favourably early hour Mr. Newdegate rose to resume the debate a regular stampede ensued, and empty benches mournfully echoed back the hon. gentleman's solemn exclamation "What a muddle this House has got into in the case of Mr. Bradlaugh!" Towards bringing it out from this condition Mr. Newdegate contributed some strictures on the speech of Mr. Bright, a considerable display of research in constitutional history, and an endeavour, the fulfilment of which was frustrated by the Speaker, to give a succinct account of the course of events in France since the epoch of the Revolution.

The Premier speaks. Shortly before six o'clock, whilst the House remained in this denuded condition, the Prime Minister unexpectedly rose. The news that he was on his feet rapidly spread through the corridors and ante-rooms, and within ten minutes the whole aspect of the assembly was changed. Every seat was filled with watchful and attentive listeners: a

score of peers, intercepted by the news as they left their own House, crowding into the gallery. Mr. Gladstone, starting from an appeal made to him by Mr. Newdegate, affirmed that the present law is adequate to deal with the case. He could not conceive anything more unfortunate or anything less prudent than to legislate on the general question from this particular case. Having gravely expressed his regret at the continued absence from the debate of Sir John Holker (who, it is well known, differs from his colleagues in the late Government in opinion on this subject), Mr. Gladstone set forth the position of the Government. He believed it to be their duty frankly to offer their best advice in circumstances for which they were in no way responsible, and then to leave the matter in the hands of the House.

The Prime Minister, who spoke for a little over an hour, was followed by Mr. Gibson, ex-Attorney-General for Ireland, who roused much enthusiasm on the Opposition benches by a trenchant denunciation of the character of Mr. Bright's speech on the previous night—a speech which, to his mind, was characterised by a completer absence of toleration than any he had ever heard.

The debate was continued, in a well-nigh empty House, by Mr. W. Fowler, Sir H. Tyler, Mr. Mellor, Mr. Rodwell, and Mr. A. Moore, who "raised a humble voice" to an unusually high pitch in denunciation of Mr. Bright's "most mischievous speech." Mr. Forester devoted a considerable proportion of a quaint speech to reproof of the same address. Referring to Mr. Bright's remark on the subject of lack of practical religion among the upper classes of society, he said, in a voice not untouched with emotion, "I wish the right hon. gentleman had been where I was last Sunday, and seen ladies of title carrying baskets of flowers —." Whither, and why, the flowers were being borne, was lost amid the irreverent roar of laughter that burst from the Ministerial benches, drowning the end of the sentence, and extinguishing the orator.

Mr. Sullivan illustrated the abiding interest of Roman Catholics in the question of Parliamentary tests by delivering in their name a strong protest against the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh, whether by subscribing the oath or by making affirmation.

Just before midnight Sir Stafford Northcote interposed with the proposition that "we should consider the position in which we stand." This he did with a minuteness of detail a little provoking at this hour of the second consecutive night of a debate which practically began six weeks ago. What he discovered as the result of his painstaking inquiry was that there was "a governing desire to procure the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh"—a conclusion which awakened an increasingly somnolent Opposition sufficiently to give forth an emphatic cheer.

**The division.** When the paper was handed to Mr. Winn, indicating that the motion had been defeated, a scene of extraordinary excitement followed. For the space of two minutes the tellers stood at the table unable to make their voices heard, members below the gangway standing up cheering and waving their hats. When the deafening noise had subsided the figures were announced :

For admitting Mr. Bradlaugh	...	...	230
Against	...	...	275

Renewed cheers broke forth, some members below the gangway on the Opposition embracing each other in the ecstasy of the triumph. Sir Hardinge Giffard's amendment, declaring that Mr. Bradlaugh be permitted neither to take the oath nor to affirm, becoming the substantive motion, was then agreed to without a division, and the crowded House rapidly dispersed.

**June 23.—More of Mr. Bradlaugh.** Members assembled in large numbers and in good time in the expectation that when, eleven hours earlier, strident cheers had announced the refusal of a majority to admit Mr. Bradlaugh, the episode had not concluded. They had not long to wait for the fulfilment of this reasonable anticipation. Mr. Bradlaugh had arrived at Westminster some minutes before noon, and had waited in the lobby till prayers were concluded. This ceremony was delayed by the tardiness of the Speaker in taking his seat. But on the stroke of half-past twelve, when members had settled down in their places, when the last Amen had been uttered, and the skirts of the chaplain had just vanished through the doorway, the familiar figure of Mr. Bradlaugh was seen making straight for the table.

As no one seemed to know precisely what to do, several members called out “Order!”—a demonstration which Mr. Bradlaugh passed by without notice. As he stood at the corner of the table where the oath is usually administered, Sir Erskine May advanced to meet him, and, returning, made a communication to the Speaker. The right hon. gentleman, addressing Mr. Bradlaugh, informed him of the resolution arrived at by the House at an early hour that morning, and added that he had no option but to request him to withdraw. Mr. Bradlaugh, standing where he had halted, with face colourless, but firmly set, began to address the Speaker. He was met by peremptory cries to “Withdraw!” amid which were heard some demands that he might speak. The Speaker reiterating his command, Mr. Bradlaugh consented to retire whilst his application for a hearing was being considered. Bowing low to the Chair, he retreated, making a second obeisance when he reached the Bar, and then went forth into the lobby.

As soon as he was gone, Mr. Labouchere, without circumlocution or argument, moved that Mr. Bradlaugh be heard. The Speaker asked if any one seconded this motion, an appeal answered by Mr. Lyulph Stanley. Mr. Walpole and Mr. Gorst rising together, there were loud cries for the former gentleman, who pointed out that, in accordance with precedent in the case of Mr. O’Connell, a member situated as Mr. Bradlaugh was should be heard only at the Bar. Mr. Labouchere had no objection to adopt this suggestion, and the amended motion being put from the Chair, it was on the point of being carried when Sir R. Cross, fearful lest Mr. Gladstone should escape personal connection with this new phase of the difficulty, suggested that “something should be heard from the Government.” Mr. Gladstone had been in his place from the first, though it could scarcely escape attention that he somewhat ostentatiously paraded the casual character of his arrival. He had brought with him his walking stick and wore his gloves, after the manner in which, six years ago, he was accustomed to intimate to all whom it might concern that he had temporarily abdicated official position. He made no response to Sir R. Cross’s friendly suggestion, and, the question being put, it was agreed without dissent that Mr. Bradlaugh should be heard at the Bar.

At the Bar. The agitated messengers had no sooner drawn out from its retreat the brass pole that means so much and is shut up within so little, than Mr. Bradlaugh strode in and stood before it. It presently became clear that, for the purpose of the effective delivery of his speech, Mr. Bradlaugh's adversaries had provided him with a singular advantage. Instead of speaking in the face of only one half his audience, himself cooped up with other members on a crowded bench, he now stood literally on the floor of the House, facing the crowded historic assembly, "one against six hundred."

Beginning in a low voice he craved the indulgence of the House whilst he showed cause against the enactment of the resolution agreed upon at the instance of Sir Hardinge Giffard. The narrow but high ground on which he took his stand was that by its action the House had placed itself outside the law. He was there ready to fulfil every form of the House, and prepared to perform every duty commanded him by his constituents. At present he was standing at the Bar of the House pleading for justice ; "but," he added, pointing towards the benches below the gangway to the right of the Speaker, "it is *there* I should plead." As for his opinions, he did not choose them, and he was not ashamed of them. He would forfeit for ever the honour he cherished of being returned as a member of the House of Commons rather than slink into his place disguising or hiding his convictions.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked, suddenly dropping his voice from the height of passion to which he had been carried when delivering these passages, and, leaning lightly on the Bar, looked with placid interest round the House, as if the question were one in which he was only remotely interested. Would they declare the seat vacant? Well, he would be again returned. And what next? "I have no desire to wrestle with you for justice," he continued, holding both hands out over the Bar with deprecating gesture. But if the struggle were sought by the House, he would fearlessly and hopefully submit the cause to a tribunal higher even than this great assembly, and would ask Public Opinion to decide between him and them. This said, he turned and left the House.

He had spoken, without reference to note, for twenty minutes, often rising to heights of impassioned eloquence, but always with

perfect command over himself and his audience. At the outset many members marked the eloquent periods with applause. But gentlemen opposite, jealous for the dignity of the House, temporarily turned into a court of appeal, met these generous demonstrations with shouts of "Order." In the end it was tacitly agreed that he should be heard in silence. But as he withdrew a hearty cheer broke forth, which subsided only when the Speaker rose and said that the House having heard Mr. Bradlaugh, it remained for it to decide what step should follow.

All eyes were turned towards the Premier, who sat unresponsive, with gloved hand resting on his walking stick. After a brief pause Sir Stafford Northcote rose, and was received with loud cheers from the Conservatives. The Leader of the Opposition observed that the House having, after full debate, come to the conclusion that Mr. Bradlaugh should not be allowed either to take the oath or to make affirmation, it did not seem to him that there was any occasion to hold further communication with Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Gladstone now rose, preserving the fugitive character of his interposition by holding his stick in one hand and his hat in the other whilst addressing the House. He pointed out that, holding the conviction he had supported in debate and had emphasised by his vote, that the proceeding approved by the majority was illegal, he was in a delicate position. He would, however, say that the House, having by its generous and wise indulgence heard Mr. Bradlaugh, it was now his (Mr. Gladstone's) duty in the first place to sustain the Chair and submit himself to the will of the majority.

The Speaker, disagreeing with Sir Stafford Northcote, thought that further communication should be made to Mr. Bradlaugh, and submitted the question that he be called in to be informed of the final decision of the House. Mr. Labouchere, amid a scene of some confusion, proposed to move that Sir Hardinge Giffard's resolution be rescinded, remaining unabashed before Mr. Newdegate's solemn declaration that "his conduct was scarcely respectful to the House." Mr. Gladstone advised Mr. Labouchere not to press his resolution, a suggestion promptly accepted by that gentleman "as coming from one who had so nobly supported the cause of civil and religious liberty, and had

so bravely stood by one whom, though isolated, he believed to be within his right.” This tribute to the course taken by the Prime Minister was hailed from the Ministerial benches with loud and prolonged cheering.

At the table. The way being now opened for Mr. Bradlaugh's return, the attendants made signs of once more drawing out the Bar, which had been shut up on Mr. Bradlaugh's departure. This was met by cries of “Table! table!” from the Ministerialists, answered by shouts of “Bar! bar!” from the opposite benches. Mr. Bradlaugh settled this new controversy by entering and walking up to the table, where he stood silent and respectful. The Speaker remained seated, and, addressing him as “Mr. Bradlaugh,” briefly recited the events of the sitting, and concluded by commanding him to withdraw.

“I beg respectfully to insist on my right as duly elected member for Northampton,” Mr. Bradlaugh composedly replied. “I beg you to administer the oath, and I respectfully refuse to withdraw.”

The House was now getting acclimatised to the storm, and heard with comparative composure the authority of the Speaker thus deliberately challenged. The right hon. gentleman repeated his command, and Mr. Bradlaugh, with unvaried voice, reiterated his refusal. Rising, now that he addressed the House, the Speaker asked for a mandate to enforce the authority of the Chair. This evidently took the House a little aback. Honourable members thought they had fulfilled their duty when they had cried, “Order!” or “Withdraw!” and did not quite know what to do now that the Speaker cast on them the responsibility of the next step. In this difficulty they turned again to the Treasury Bench, and cried out “Gladstone!” But the Premier was reading a letter, and was not inclined to permit his attention to be distracted. Sir Stafford Northcote, again coming to the rescue, generously admitted that the position of the Prime Minister was one of great delicacy, and that the House, going its own way in defiance of his advice, was scarcely justified in seeking his counsel on recurring points of difficulty. Sir Stafford Northcote therefore took upon himself to move that the Speaker be invested with such power as was requisite for the enforcement of his authority.

A "stranger" in the House. The Speaker put this new question from the Chair, and a division being challenged with the customary formula, "Strangers will withdraw," the House became conscious of a new and even ludicrous dilemma. Here was Mr. Bradlaugh standing in statuesque posture at the table. A solemn vote of the House had declined to admit him to membership. He was, therefore, a "stranger." Would he obey the injunction and "withdraw?" Nothing that had gone before favoured a conclusion in the affirmative, and members resigned themselves to the unparalleled conclusion that, whilst the House was emptied for a division, a "stranger," so far from "withdrawning," was left in sole possession, with his hand almost resting on the mace.

When the tellers returned it appeared that 326 had voted for the motion, and 38 voted against it. The Premier, Sir William Harcourt, Sir Henry James, Mr. Osborne Morgan, and other Ministers voted in the majority. As the little group of non-contents, on returning, passed between the Treasury Bench and the table, Mr. Peter Taylor stopped to shake hands with Mr. Bradlaugh, who had stood by the mace, silent and motionless, during the long process of the division.

Crisis.

It was now felt that the actual crisis had arrived.

The Sergeant-at-Arms left his chair and stood at the Bar. The Speaker, addressing him, commanded him to remove Mr. Bradlaugh. This was more easily said than done, for Mr. Bradlaugh is a tall man and burly to boot, and had studiously refrained from any indication of intention to use his own legs. Amidst breathless silence the Sergeant-at-Arms, forgetting his customary obeisance to the Chair, advanced and tapped the member for Northampton on the shoulder. Mr. Bradlaugh, consumed by anxiety that everything should be in order, intimated that he was prepared to go as far as the Bar, but promised immediately to return.

Mr. Bradlaugh  
and the Ser-  
geant-at-Arms  
advance and  
retire.

This undertaking he faithfully fulfilled. Having peacefully accompanied the Sergeant-at-Arms to the Bar, he abruptly turned, and moving towards the table, he, with a sweeping gesture of his right hand, claimed the right deputed to him by the electors of

Northampton to take his seat. The Sergeant-at-Arms followed, and grasping him by the arm temporarily arrested his progress. But Mr. Bradlaugh shook off the gallant Captain, and strode onward amid a scene of indescribable excitement. Half-a-dozen members were addressing the Chair from as many parts of the House. The Speaker was on his feet; members were shouting and gesticulating; and here, in the very centre of the floor, with legs set firmly apart, stood Mr. Bradlaugh, determined and defiant. Even at this crisis his passion for discriminating nice points of procedure did not desert him.

"I do not deny," he shouted, in a voice rising high above the din—"I do not deny your right to imprison me. But I dispute your right to deny me the oath."

Gradually, and with many expressions of personal regard for the Sergeant-at-Arms, who with consummate tact had combined the *suaviter in modo* with the *fortiter in re*, Mr. Bradlaugh consented to a compromise by which he retired from the middle of the floor, hitherto sacred in similar circumstances to the tread of Mr. Plimsoll, and stood just within the Bar, the Sergeant-at-Arms by his side.

Arrested.

At the instance of the Speaker, Sir Stafford Northcote now moved that Mr. Bradlaugh, having disregarded the authority and resisted the power of the Speaker, be taken into custody by the Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Gladstone said he could offer no objection to this course. Nor did Mr. Labouchere, though that gentleman took the opportunity of sententiously remarking on the singularity of the circumstance by which "a citizen of this country should be sent to prison for doing what eminent legal authorities declared to be his duty and his right." After the debate had threatened to merge into a civil war among the Irish members (Mr. Parnell and The O'Donoghue having a little difference), the motion was put, and by 274 against seven it was decreed that Mr. Bradlaugh should be committed to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Bradlaugh offering no further resistance, left the House in charge of Captain Gosset, and was remitted to the room in the Clock Tower last occupied by Mr. Grissell.

June 24. — Mr. Bradlaugh released.

In the House of Commons Mr. Bradlaugh once more occupied the earlier and profoundest attention. At the outset Mr. Labouchere gave notice that he would to-night introduce a Bill dealing with the law relating to Parliamentary oaths. The questions on the paper disposed of, Sir Stafford Northcote asked the Prime Minister whether he intended to submit to the House any motion with respect to the arrest of Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Gladstone said that within the twenty-four hours that had elapsed since the events alluded to he had not felt it his duty to bring the matter under the notice of his colleagues. He had therefore no advice to tender. Sir Stafford Northcote, in these circumstances, and recognising the fact that he himself was responsible for the motion under which Mr. Bradlaugh was committed to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, moved a resolution declaring that, the House having committed Mr. Bradlaugh to custody on account of his disobedience to the orders of the House and his resistance to its authority, and having thereby supported its authority, Mr. Bradlaugh be now discharged.

This proposal was received with loud laughter from the Ministerial benches. In introducing it Sir Stafford Northcote had incidentally observed that he presumed Mr. Bradlaugh would not take any further steps of the character which had led to the scene of the previous day. Mr. Labouchere thought it right to state, which he did amid loud laughter and ironical cheering, that should Mr. Bradlaugh be released he would at once appear and do what the Prime Minister, his colleagues, the present and the late Attorney-General held he had a perfect right to do.

Mr. Bradlaugh re-appears. The Speaker's warrant for the release of the prisoner was forthwith issued, with startling results. Whilst Mr. Gladstone was addressing the House on his financial resolutions, Mr. Bradlaugh, followed by a throng of strangers, some of whom made their way into the House, appeared at the Bar. He stood there only a moment, and then moved to the seat under the gallery which he has been accustomed to occupy pending the decision of the question raised by Sir Henry Wolff. He remained until Mr. Gladstone had concluded his speech, and then left.

## CHAPTER V.

### LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION.

An Episcopal Duel—Sir Stafford Northcote—Mr. Chaplin—Lord Randolph Churchill—Mr. Gorst—Mr. O'Donnell—Sir Henry Wolff—Mr. Parnell votes for Bradlaugh—Mr. Bradlaugh takes his Seat—Mr. Biggar patronises him—General Burnaby cites the Bishops.

June 25—An Epis- There was a pretty little scene in the House  
copal duel. of Lords to-night. The Burials Bill was on for  
third reading, and the House was full. The Bishop of  
Peterborough discussed the measure in a speech, in which  
a naturally robust intellect and prevailing common sense  
struggled against the traditions of his order. This mental  
condition lent some obscurity to his remarks, and a pas-  
sage in his speech certainly was open to the construction  
put upon it by the Archbishop of Canterbury, that he  
regretted the provision in the Bill that made Christian  
burial essential. When he sat down the Archbishop of Can-  
terbury rose, and in a tone in which, had it not been from an  
archbishop, one might have thought there was something like  
feminine spite, the most rev. prelate regretted that his right  
rev. brother had referred to the introduction of this clause. The  
Bishop of Peterborough rose to order, and explained what he  
thought he had said. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a  
manner frigidly polite, but unmistakable in its purport, regretted  
that the Bishop of Peterborough was now saying the thing which  
was not true. As it may be interesting to know the precise for-  
mula by which an archbishop tells a bishop he is wilfully per-  
verting the truth, I will quote the Archbishop's words.

“ I think it is very undesirable,” said the Archbishop, having  
coldly listened to the Bishop's version of what he really had said,  
“ that on a point like this the right rev. prelate should have  
expressed himself in a way that led to misapprehension of his  
meaning.”

This was very neat, and Lord Beaconsfield, who was  
present, relaxed into a grim smile at the spectacle of two

dignitaries of the Church giving each other the lie across the churchyard. The Bishop of Peterborough, who in his way resembles the Marquis of Salisbury, much as the Archbishop of Canterbury is like Lord Granville, furiously rose, literally girded up his loins, and strode to the table, where stood the meek-looking Primate. In the ordinary course of things, the Bishop of Peterborough, having presumably "risen to order," the Archbishop of Canterbury should have resumed his seat; but the Primate's thinner blood had also reached boiling point. With stony stare straight across the House, he ignored the presence of his right rev. and right raging brother, who, with the skirts of his white gown fiercely clutched in his nervous right hand, was lifting up his voice in further contradiction. The two prelates stood at the table amid a hubbub rarely heard in the decorous House of Lords. The Archbishop of Canterbury stood silent, stonily staring. The Bishop of Peterborough, in thunderous voice, protested that "the statement of the most rev. prelate was a misrepresentation of his words." The shocked House vigorously cried "Order!" and, eventually, the Bishop of Peterborough, wrath still flaming in his eyes, returned to the benches where sat his white-gowned brethren, peacefully suggestive of Cherubim and Seraphim.

June 26.—Sir  
Stafford North-  
cote.

Every one knows that Sir Stafford Northcote is one of the best, most kind-hearted, and most honourable men returned to Parliament. It is not so widely acknowledged, but it is equally true, that he is a man of great shrewdness, prudence, and ability. If he were only a little more unscrupulous he would pass for an exceedingly wise man; or the same effect would have followed had not accident intervened at a critical period of his life and intercepted that natural tendency towards Liberalism which, reaching fuller force, carried his master to the opposite side. No one who has watched Sir Stafford Northcote in the House of Commons, whether as leader of the Conservatives in office, or as their titular chief in days of adversity, can doubt that his natural sympathies are with the Liberals. All his mistakes have arisen from obedience in the first instance to the impulse of his nature. This has frequently landed him, to his dismay, in a position of hostility to the party with which he is officially connected. He

has straightway floundered out, even, in the excitement of the moment, going to undue lengths in the contrary direction. His party, with good reason, do not trust his instinct; he does not respect the instincts of his party, and the two live through the Session at cross purposes, with much creaking of machinery, and much noisy escape of steam at inadequate apertures.

The whole of the weary Bradlaugh incident is directly traceable to this political phenomenon. At the outset Sir Stafford Northcote, invited in due form by the *ad interim* leader of the House to second the motion for a Select Committee on a question of precedence, agreed as a matter of course. His honest mind was blind to the prospect of party advantage which shone bright and clear to the keener intelligence of Sir Henry Wolff. The discovery once made, Sir Stafford Northcote, after a period of retreat, once more appeared in his titular position, and even out-Wolffed Sir Henry. He was ready enough now to lead his party to any lengths, and into any ditch. He (of course, in a Parliamentary sense) shrieked for the blood of Mr. Bradlaugh with voice and gesture that belied his gentle instincts. It was in an excess of this new-born enthusiasm that, when the matter came to a standstill, owing to Mr. Gladstone's clever and most masterly inaction, Sir Stafford Northcote temporarily assumed the leadership of the House of Commons, and amid ringing cheers from gentlemen behind, who began to think that, after all, he was a great statesman, moved that Mr. Bradlaugh be committed to prison.

It was, perhaps, a little shock to his newly acquired position that on the following night he had to move that Mr. Bradlaugh be released. But the whole procedure was in accordance with his character and the peculiar circumstances in which he found himself placed. It was open to him, not less than to Mr. Gladstone, to leave the matter in the ready hands that, in clutching at the leadership, had brought about the whole blundering business. It is true he had voted and spoken against admitting Mr. Bradlaugh; but it was not by his action—at the outset in direct opposition to it—that the difficulty had arisen. The real leader of the House in this matter, the man who had most accurately gauged the force of its baser passion, sat below the gangway, and it was for him now to carry out the business to such conclusion as seemed to his better judgment to be logical.

But Sir Stafford, "weak and wavering; ever in a fright lest he do something wrong, does nothing right." He took the burden on his own shoulders, transferring to himself the obloquy of ignominious failure, while cleverer men, having played their game, and having had their sport, stand on one side, and swear and shrug their shoulders and sigh, "Ah! well, poor Northcote!"

It is in these circumstances gratifying to reflect that should Sir Stafford, sick at heart and weary with undeserved failure, presently retire from the unequal contest, the Opposition will not lack a choice of leaders. There are at least five men whose names suggest themselves as candidates for the office.

Mr. Chaplin. To take them in alphabetical order with the object of escaping from suspicion of partisanship, there is Mr. Chaplin. Here is a gentleman who has many acknowledged claims on the allegiance of his party. He is wealthy, well-born, loquacious, and hates Mr. Gladstone. He is, moreover, ambitious, and "fancies himself" in a political career. In an especial manner he has constituted himself the guardian of the joint buttresses of Conservatism, Land and the Church. His speech on Mr. Forster's Bill, though, perhaps, a little lacking in accuracy of detail, was the sort of thing that catches the fancy of many good Conservatives. It will not bear examination when the truculent phrases are submitted to the test of type; but it sounds well when glibly delivered in a loud voice to which earnestness, sometimes reaching the white heat of passion, lends temporary force. There would be no complaint of timidity of attack with Mr. Chaplin on the front Opposition bench. Whether in such case rear and flank would be adequately guarded, or whether, in some mad moment of advance, the whole army might not find itself surrounded and captured, is another question.

Lord Randolph Churchill. Lord Randolph Churchill is a young nobleman who has recently developed a strong taste for politics, with some tendency to supersede Sir Stafford Northcote. Whilst his party were in office Lord Randolph sat below the gangway, and occasionally varied the monotony of partisanship by prodding his own friends with an exceedingly free lance. No

one who was present will ever forget the night that he fell upon Mr. Selater Booth. It was a moment when the right hon. gentleman, in accordance with his habit, was taking on the Treasury bench a little rest after dinner. Suddenly to be awakened from sound sleep by cheers and ribald laughter is in any circumstance unpleasant. But to fall peacefully asleep amidst members of an administration secure in a large majority, and to be awakened by a hilarious hubbub, through which it presently becomes clear that a youthful but distinguished member of your own party is attacking *you*, is an experience probably confined to Mr. Selater Booth. Lord Randolph is a clever young man, with ten times the Parliamentary ability (if Mr. Chaplin's mind can grasp the computation) of the member for Mid-Lincolnshire. He has certainly a pretty turn for sarcasm, an honest contempt for bumptious incapacity, and courage amounting to recklessness, which combine to make him equally dangerous, whether as friend or foe. This controversy about Mr. Bradlaugh has stirred up in him hitherto unsuspected depths of religious feeling, and he goes about the business of daily Parliamentary life with an added gravity which in one of his years may portend much.

Mr. Gorst. Mr. Gorst lacks certain personal recommendations possessed by these two competitors to the affection and fealty of his party. He is rather tolerated than encouraged, rather made use of than liked. Whenever the House sees Mr. Gorst rising to catch the Speaker's eye, it instinctively concludes that something disagreeable is going to be said. Mr. Gorst has been very busy of late, making speeches himself and being the cause of speeches from others. He has mastered the great secret (which certainly does not lie very far beneath the surface) that a sure way of bringing oneself under notice and creating a little liveliness in the House is to address some observation personal to Mr. Gladstone, and paraphrastic of any statement he might have delivered. It is the Prime Minister's most conspicuous and fatal weakness that he has no sense of perspective in Parliamentary debate. The most insignificant member in the House looms large upon his vision the moment he addresses himself to any remarks the Premier has made. The sensitive mind and keen nervousness of the Premier may be

played upon by the most inconsiderable instrument. Mr. Gorst knows this, and is not slow to make use of his knowledge.

Mr. O'Donnell. Mr. O'Donnell's candidature might seem absurd if there were not a distinguished precedent for it. Mr. O'Donnell to-day is no further removed from the leadership of the Conservative party, as far as contemporary eyes can gauge the chances, than was Mr. Disraeli in this very month forty-eight years ago, when Daniel O'Connell recommended him as a candidate for Wycombe on the ground that "his readiness to carry the Reform Bill into practical effect towards the production of cheap Government and free institutions is enhanced by the talent and information which he brings to the good cause." Mr. O'Donnell, if the subject were a proper one for him to discourse upon, would be able to set forth many striking resemblances between his own personal and political condition and that from which the young gentleman who is now Earl of Beaconsfield started. It is true that, as far as history goes, Mr. Disraeli of 1832 had no familiar, in the form of Mr. Biggar, relentlessly dogging his footsteps, and maliciously thwarting his objects. But the day may come when Mr. O'Donnell's soul will be delivered from this strange thraldom, and he will be able to strike for fame and fortune free from the long lean hand that now enchains his wrist.

Sir Henry Wolff. Nothing but the accident of alphabetical arrangement could bring Sir Henry Wolff at the tail of this list. It is to him more than to any one else that the House of Commons is indebted for the position in which it now stands with respect to Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Gorst, Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. O'Donnell, and the rest were ready enough to fall into the plan when sketched for them. But it was created in the recesses of the brain of a statesman trained to diplomacy from boyhood's years, schooled in the city in which Machiavelli lived, familiar with Brussels, for a brief period resident in the Ionian Islands, more recently British Commissioner under the Treaty of Berlin, and for some time in the West Norfolk Militia.

July 1.—Affirmation Resolution Carried.

It was twenty-five minutes to six when Mr. Gladstone rose, and moved a resolution to the effect that every person returned as a member

of the House of Commons making claim to be a person permitted by law to make affirmation may without question make solemn affirmation without taking the oath, remaining subject to any liability by statute. The terms of the motion specially provided that the decision of the House arrived at last week with respect to Mr. Bradlaugh should not make the resolution nugatory so far as that gentleman is concerned.

He spoke for just half an hour, presenting a clear and masterly history of the events which had preceded the sitting of to-day, and which led to the Cabinet undertaking to propose a settlement. They might well, he observed, have left the settlement to the majority who created the difficulty. But the dignity of the House must be maintained with respect to the decency of its proceedings, and he plainly indicated his belief that any further delay on the part of the Government in taking up the matter would have led to a repetition of the scene which had resulted in Mr. Bradlaugh's committal. If the scene had been again repeated Mr. Bradlaugh would have again been committed to the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, "and I cannot," the Premier added, "see any method of deliverance from these proceedings by committal on one day and release without apology on the next."

Sir Stafford Northcote believed that if they were to deal with the question effectively it must be by legislation.

Mr. Parnell votes for Bradlaugh. Mr. Parnell in an interesting speech, in which he justified himself before "Catholic Ireland" for the vote he was about to give in favour of the Premier's resolution. He protested his detestation of the tenets of Mr. Bradlaugh. To vote in his favour was personally odious to him, but that was no reason why he should break the law. Mr. Sullivan, admitting the charm of the Prime Minister's oratory, said his speech was beside the question. Was the resolution a capitulation to Mr. Bradlaugh, or was an amendment of the law demanded by a large class? There was a story in an Irish novel of a lord-lieutenant who was informed that the North Cork Militia were paraded in the Castle-yard. He went out to review them, and, looking round, asked, "Where is the North Cork Militia?" "Here I am, your honour," said a solitary individual standing there in uniform. Where was the class

oppressed by the present condition of the law? "Here I am, says an individual sitting there under the gallery," Mr. Sullivan responded, pointing to the place where Mr. Bradlaugh sat listening to the debate. Mr. Sullivan's speech was on the whole the most eloquent and powerful delivered during the debate on that side of the question, and it received a liberal meed of applause from the Conservatives.

At quarter to two a division was called, the resolution being carried by 303 votes against 249. The announcement of the figures was received with loud cheers from the Ministerial benches. The House then divided on Mr. Sullivan's motion, making the resolution prospective. This was rejected by 274 to 236, and the House adjourned at four o'clock.

July 2.—Mr. Bradlaugh takes his seat. At the morning sitting of the House of Commons Mr. Bradlaugh took his seat on making affirmation.

There was a fair attendance of members, more particularly on the Ministerial benches, but nothing unusual. The Prime Minister, who had left the House a little before four yesterday morning, after a continuous sitting of twelve hours, was, pardonably, a few minutes late, coming in after the ceremony was over. Mr. Bright and Mr. Forster, who had also taken part in the division at a few minutes to four in the morning, were punctually in their places. The Speaker having in due form called upon members desiring to take their seats to come forward, Sir Sydney Waterlow advanced, introduced by Sir John Lubbock and another friend. He subscribed the oath. Immediately behind him came Mr. Bradlaugh, to whom Sir Erskine May promptly handed the form of affirmation, which the new member recited, and was next introduced to the Speaker, with whom he shook hands. Having been returned at the general election it was not necessary that any member should introduce him, and he accordingly walked to the table alone.

Mr. Biggar promises him. On taking his seat on the second bench below the gangway at the extreme end, almost under the gallery where he sat for so many nights, he received several visits, a somewhat prolonged one from Mr. Biggar, who cordially congratulated him on having overcome the obstacles that barred the way to his seat. The first function Mr. Bradlaugh was

called upon to perform as a duly elected and formally admitted member of Parliament was to assist in constituting a House whilst Mr. Newdegate, in solemn tones and with forlornest manner, recited the terms of a petition entrusted to him for presentation, and which prayed that "Charles Bradlaugh, a professed atheist," might not be permitted to take his seat.

July 3.—General  
Burnaby cites  
the Bishops.

It was at one o'clock on the morning of Friday, the 2nd July, 1880, that General Burnaby, having executed a forced march, covering an enormous tract of country, joined his forces to those of Her Majesty's Opposition, and gave a new aspect to the famous Battle of Bradlaugh. The engagement had proceeded all night long with varying measure of dulness. Mr. Gladstone had opened with an attack of conspicuous skill and overwhelming force. Sir Stafford Northcote had feebly replied, and thereafter fire had opened all along the line, and both sides pounded away without doing each other any particular damage. At eleven o'clock brisk firing was heard on the left, where the Irish brigade created a diversion by attacking each other, occasionally pausing to discharge a few stray shots at mankind in general. Mr. O'Donnell, having skilfully waited till such time as he could have the combined armies for spectators of his prowess, dashed out and made an elaborate but harmless attack in the name of "my Gracious Sovereign," and every one, worn out with the dreary ineffective performance, was longing that night or Blucher (in this case a division or an adjournment) would come.

It was at this epoch that General Burnaby was observed in position on the heights immediately to the left of the Speaker's chair. Having with military instinct observed the regulation that a reconnoissance in force should not be undertaken till night-fall was close at hand, it was only at this advanced hour that he was able to get his battery into play. There was some difficulty at the outset in recognising the gallant General. He had been seen earlier in the evening in the neighbourhood of his more usual place on the front bench below the gangway. He was then in morning dress, with light-coloured trousers, perhaps a little short considering that he wore shoes. Now he was not only in dinner dress, but, doubtless for strategic purposes, had abandoned his usual place on the plateau by the front bench below the

gangway, and was discovered in the centre of the third bench behind ex-Ministers.

When the assembled hosts mastered his identity, and comprehended his intention to speak, they united in a roar of depreciation. But the advantage of having a good character presently became apparent. General Burnaby, though a new member, has frequently addressed the House. But his speeches have invariably been remarkable for their brevity. On one occasion, speaking in defence of his brother magistrates, he delivered an oration exactly five sentences long—a jewel worthy to sparkle for all ages on the outstretched forefinger of Time. In the circumstances of the hour the House felt convinced that the General would not go beyond his habit, and that, on the whole, time would be wasted in objecting.

So the uproar partially subsided, and the General proceeded, as indeed it was evident he intended to proceed whether the uproar subsided or not. Having reached the average length of his customary oration, he put his right hand in his breast pocket, and produced a sheaf of notes eight inches by six, surface measurement, and fully an inch thick. At sight of this, portending an address of unknown length, the House roared as a lion might roar having been deluded into passing through a doorway on pretence that it was escaping from imprisonment only to find itself in a smaller den. The General lacks many of the inches, but has much facial resemblance to his cousin, the famous "Fred" of Khiva and the untrodden wilds of Asia Minor. He has the same pale face, soft and gentle when pleased or engaged upon pleasing, but capable of momentarily settling into a look of stony resolution. With such a gaze the General now regarded the uproarious assembly before him. Still, not wishing to give unnecessary pain, he masked his battery, as it were, by placing behind his back the hand that held the sheaf of notes. But the House, now alive to what was in store for it, raged and roared without intermission. Through the undisciplined uproar the voice of the General could be heard, as, with shoulders squarely set, head thrown back, and eyes blazing with the light of battle, he emitted a series of short, sharp sentences, which, though they probably conveyed his view on the constitutional, legal, and religious question before the House, sounded suspiciously like the word of command on parade.

The time came when the tenderest consideration for the feeling of the House must be disregarded, and the notes produced. So the General brought them round with a half salute, and, holding them squarely in front of him, began to deal with the contents. Gradually it became clear through the now subsided uproar that the General had performed a feat unexampled in Parliamentary debate. Whilst members had been talking he had been working. He had put a girdle round the earth, and in something more than forty minutes had obtained the opinion on the matter at issue of a most remarkable collection of Church dignitaries. From what source of information he had made himself acquainted with the names and addresses of the ecclesiastics who were presently introduced to the notice of the House was a matter for subsequent surprise. At the moment members were so enchanted with the idea of the Colonel of the Grenadier Guards communicating by telegraph with right reverend bishops, and with pistol at their head demanding their views on the Bradlaugh controversy, that they gave themselves up with mad delight to the enjoyment of the joke.

To the General it was clearly no joke. It had been a brilliant idea, flashing across his mind in some moment of absorbed thought, and he had carried it out with soldierly promptness and cultured attention to detail. Such a collection of bishops with unfamiliar names was never heard of in the House of Commons. The titles read like a page from one of Anthony Trollope's novels, and their recitation gained immensely by the odd way in which their Lordships, having been captured by the General, were made to "number off" in view of the House of Commons.

"What says the Bishop of Raphoe?" the General cried in sharp, stern tones, which brought before the imagination the spectacle of a bishop standing in the guard-room between two soldiers, and interrogated by an irate orderly officer.

The House, now understanding and entering fully into the spirit of the joke, roared with laughter as the General read out from the first sheet of his notes the opinions of the Bishop of Raphoe.

"The Bishop of Argyle and the Isles!" shouted the General at the top of his voice, and the House relapsed into another fit of laughter that threatened to create vacancies in the representatives of more than one constituency.

"Well, now, the Chief Rabbi," the General continued, encouraged by his success to lapse into a conversational tone. Hereupon certain ribald members on the Opposition benches called out, "Well, now, the Shah!" and "What says the Sultan?" The General took no notice of these interruptions, but went on reading his notes, gravely placing the House in full possession of the opinions of the Bishop of Ossory and the Bishop of Galway. At this stage the Speaker interposed, apparently under the impression that the General was reading his speech, and pointed out that such a course was a breach of the rules of debate. The General, fishing in his coat-tail pocket, produced a tightly-bound bundle of telegrams of the thickness of a conductor's *bâton*, and, amid roars of laughter, unfolded them and strewed them about the floor, explaining the while that these were the original documents received from his right rev. correspondents, and that what he was reading were simply extracts written out for greater convenience.

The Speaker thus appeased, the General went on as if nothing had happened, next announcing "the Superior of the Greek Orthodox Church," who was received with shrieks of laughter. The Prime Minister, who had been sitting restlessly attentive all through the long night, and who at this hour presented an appearance of piteous exhaustion, woke up under the spell of the General's eloquence. Mr. Forster, stretched at full length, with his head on the back of the bench, emitted a series of gigantic chuckles that shook the Treasury benches, whilst the Premier literally rolled on his seat with unconstrained laughter. All this while not a smile flickered over the pale face framed in fringe of coal-black hair, upon which all eyes were turned.

"Mr. Spurgeon!" the General next announced, much as if he were the proprietor of a wax-work exhibition, and now invited the attention of the audience to the counterfeit presentation of a celebrated and particularly popular personage.

Mr. Spurgeon, it appeared, had not been at home when the General's message had arrived. There was also, owing to the continuous shout of laughter, some uncertainty as to whether "His Holiness the Pope" had made due response. But it was characteristic of the sense of honour habitual to a Burnaby that, having received from an "an eminent Presby-

terian" a reply not at all in accordance with his own views, the General read it at length. Even whilst he spoke a telegram arrived, and was passed from hand to hand along the crowded benches. It might have been from the Patriarch of Antioch or from the medicine man of an African potentate, the view on the subject of either of whom would have been deeply interesting. But the General was surfeited with telegrams, and, in spite of entreaties, declined to open this fresh arrival. He had saved till the last the opinion of the Bishop of Peterborough; but this proved not nearly so attractive to the House as that of some of the less familiar dignitaries of the Church. Moreover, the extract was exceedingly lengthy, and the General abruptly resumed his seat before he had reached the "Amen!"

But his purpose was effected. He had handled his forces with the skill and courage proved a quarter of a century earlier on the field of Inkermann. The enemy was too strong, and the recoil from the shock of his gallant attack was brief. The Ministerial majority was fifty-four; but who can say what it might not have been had not the House been compelled to hear answered the question, "And what does the Bishop of Raphoe say?"

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## CHAPTER VI.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Lord R. Churchill on Ireland—A Reverend Member—Mr. Roundell—Mr. Storey Maskelyne—The Compensation for Disturbances Bill—Mr. Biggar breaks out—A hard Sum—Mr. Briggs, M.P.—Another Orator—Mr. Gladstone takes the Helm—Questions and Answers—An Irish Postmistress—The Root of the Evil.

July 5.—Lord R. The debate on the second reading of the Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill was renewed by Lord Randolph Churchill. The noble lord urged that whilst the distress in Ireland was great, the fraud and imposture which arose with it were also great. If the good harvest which now appeared certain was realised, there

would be no occasion for the introduction of any such violent measures as those proposed by the Government. In some heated passages the noble lord reiterated the statement that the Bill was brought in in haste, almost in a panic, "for the futile purpose of expediting Government business by pacifying the Irish members."

The Prime Minister, after some gentle but none the less effective sarcasm at the expense of the noble lord and his historical researches, "which would be more valuable if marked by greater approaches to accuracy," confronted the lurid picture of robbery and confiscation by certain matters of fact. He admitted that the character of the Bill might be regarded as exceptional and extraordinary; but he urged that there had been already, both in the late Parliament and in the present, sanction given to other measures dealing with Ireland of an exceptional and extraordinary character. He pointed out that the Land Act of 1870, when read a second time, had contained the very principle embodied in this Bill, and that Lord Beaconsfield, with sagacious forecast, had "either counselled or inhibited, or at any rate had educated his party," to the point of their permitting that Bill to be read a second time without a division. Having by accepting that measure swallowed a camel, the party opposite were now straining at a gnat.

July 9.—A reverend member. Mr. Nelson, some time minister of a Presbyterian congregation in the north of Ireland, and now member for Mayo, has a striking oratorical style. Curran used to scrape the floor of the House with his finger-nails, as, in an ecstasy of rhetoric, he bent forward and thanked Heaven he had no gestures. Mr. Nelson stops short of his illustrious countryman, but not much. His gestures are peculiarly his own, and are entirely new to the House of Commons. As he speaks he is in active motion in every limb. One might imagine that a man accustomed to address his fellow creatures from the pulpit would have acquired a certain sense of the limits of space. Probably when Mr. Nelson yet preached he had a platform like Mr. Spurgeon, from which he might not only discourse, but on which he might promenade. The hon. and rev. gentleman's coat plays a large part in his arguments. Being loosely made, it lends itself with easy grace to the duly

advanced steps of the syllogism. Put in form, Mr. Nelson's proposition runs thus:—

All restrictions on freedom of education should be abolished.

A clerical headship is a restriction on education;

Therefore all clerical headships should be abolished.

In stating the term Mr. Nelson seized his coat by the seam at the side, crossing his arms over his chest. In advancing to the proposition, he began to draw his coat tight, and when he had reached the argument he, with a mighty shout of "therefore," drew the garment tighter still, with head bent forward in a paroxysm of demonstration.

In the early part of his discourse, observing his manner of ruthlessly girding up his loins, bending his head forward, and placing his right foot out in the attitude of preparation for a spring, the Speaker began to speculate on the possibility that in the unknown parts of Ireland whence the hon. gentleman comes, it might be the custom for an orator to point his peroration by butting the chairman below the belt. But Mr. Nelson had no such design in his mind. These remarkable gymnastics, performed standing well out on the floor of the House, were incidental accompaniments of an honest and manly speech, sparkling with quaint humour and full of aphorism. This is the second time he has spoken, and to-night's effort secured his position in the House, which has a quick regard for eccentricity of any kind, so that it be honest and kindly. Apart from his wrestling with himself, and the under-current of excitement maintained throughout his speech, the audience being in doubt as to whether his marches and counter-marches will eventually land him in the lobby or on the Treasury bench, Mr. Nelson's intonation of the phrase, "Mr. Speaker," is sufficient to ensure him fame. Till one has listened to the member for Mayo through a twenty minutes' speech he can never know what depths of entreaty, what niceties of argument, what tones of indignation, what flashes of sarcasm, what trumpet blasts of defiance, lie latent in the phrase. It is scarcely too much to say that at one time when Mr. Nelson used that commonplace tone of address, Mr. Beresford Hope and Mr. Newdegate beheld as in a flash of abysmal lightning the disestablishment of the Church of England, together with the disendowment of those whom Mr. Nelson, going dangerously near to rend his garments, alluded to as "cunning clerics."

Mr. Roundell. The debate on the whole was one of those odd unreal episodes which sometimes befall the House of Commons, and bring out strong phases of character. It was opened by Mr. Roundell, who wants clerical headships abolished at all the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and said so in a speech of an hour's duration. Mr. Roundell's speech, in a manner quite different from Mr. Nelson's, was a novelty in the House of Commons. It had a certain indescribable faded college flavour about it. It was just such a speech as Mr. Casaubon might have delivered had he been returned to Parliament. It is possible that a large proportion of members present did not listen to it, or heard it indistinctly, as one reclining after dinner and a hard week's work might hear the murmuring of innumerable bees. But Mr. Roundell's manner of delivery insensibly carried conviction. He had evidently studied the subject, and bestowed many hours upon the endeavour of thinking out a way of deliverance. One felt, looking upon his utterly dejected figure, and listening to the tones of his voice, melancholy beyond all depths reached by Mr. Newdegate, that it must be a very bad case indeed, and that, short of following the speech, it was a man's duty to do anything in his power to assist in remedying the evil it deplored.

Mr. Storey Maskelyne. It was quite a relief when Mr. Storey Maskelyne, suddenly rising from Mr. Roundell's side as if projected from a catapult, proposed to second the motion. Mr. Maskelyne's speech was also full of academic flavour, "and therefore," as Mr. Nelson would say, was necessarily mild. But, owing to some occult law of action and reaction, it had a singular effect on the gentleman charged with its delivery. How he had managed to keep himself down all through the long hour Mr. Roundell was making his moan is a mystery. Extra sand bags may have had something to do with the phenomenon. These being now cast off, Mr. Maskelyne rose, and swayed to and fro like a balloon on the point of delivery for ascent. Mr. Nelson, speaking from the front bench below the gangway, had the whole floor of the House for exercise. Mr. Maskelyne, being cooped up on a back bench, was dangerously restricted in the matter of space. But he made the most of

what there was, taking short turns to the right and left, walking backwards and forwards with quick, nervous step. He had brought voluminous notes, and was continually forgetting that he had put them in his breast-pocket. His alarm when, on returning from one of his excursions, he found his hands empty, was piteous to see. At first he was under the impression that he must have left the manuscript at the other end of the bench, and with quick tread turned on an expedition of discovery. After a while he detected his own habit, and towards the end of the speech, whenever he had lost his manuscript, went without a moment's hesitation in search of it to the breast-pocket of his coat. Once, not immediately finding it, he sat down for greater convenience of search, and, being seated, he had not the resolution to rise again.

So his oration came to an end. This, with the speech that followed from Mr. Beresford Hope, one of his happiest efforts in the new Parliament, formed a pleasant and agreeable evening, coming in at the close of a toilsome week. It was like taking a stroll through the cloisters of a cathedral after passing through the turmoil of an election contest. Its effect upon members was so far permanent that when presently the House went into committee on the Compensation for Disturbances Bill the preamble was postponed in five minutes, whereas at the morning sitting five hours had been wasted in an ineffectual attempt to make this slight step in progress.

The Compensation  
for Disturbances Bill.

The House just now is in a bad way that makes one linger over this quaint incursion of decorous Dons. Mr. Forster's unfortunate Bill has brought about a state of Disturbance for which we look in vain for adequate Compensation. It has encouraged the Opposition, disheartened the Ministerialists, broken up the Ministry, and aggravated the Irish. With a whoop of delight Mr. Parnell has broken loose from the condition of comparative quietude in which he passed the earlier weeks of the Session. With equal joyousness Mr. Biggar has followed suit, and there is fruitful promise of "scenes" that should make the rest of the Session memorable. It has been noted that when an habitual drunkard has submitted to a period of self-enforced sobriety, he marks his relapse by a

debauch of exceptional severity. This familiar phenomenon finds some parallel in the case of Mr. Biggar. For some weeks, whilst Mr. Parnell has been toying with Mr. Forster, he strictly observed the pledge taken against disorderly conduct in the House. It is true that last Saturday he had a relapse; but it was a premonitory symptom of the inevitable and doubtless then determined-upon conclusion.

Mr. Biggar breaks out. To-day, however, he broke out, and, by a single phrase, made up for a much longer period of comparative decency. When the House of Commons sits helpless to hear one of its members speak of assassination as "a certain measure of physical force," and declare its application to Irish landlords to be "not unjustifiable," the question suggests itself, whether legislation, like charity, should not begin at home. The condition of Ireland may be melancholy, and the relations between employers and workmen certainly call for revision; but to the average mind it would appear that there is similar lack in respect of the rules of a Legislative Chamber, where a member may, practically unchecked, deliver himself of such sentiments as suggest themselves to the genial mind of Mr. Biggar.

July 12.—A hard sum. In committee on Civil Service estimates to-night some sensation was created by Mr. Finigan moving to reduce by £19,000 the vote for £12,300 on account of the maintenance of harbours. He said he did this "as a protest against the bad manner in which the Irish harbours are treated." The peculiar difficulties of such a proposition having been pointed out by the Chairman, the hon. member consented to reduce his demand by £8,000.

July 16.—Mr. Briggs, M.P. When the member for Blackburn, carried away to-night by his own eloquence in opposing the motion for the erection in Westminster Hall of a memorial of the late Prince Imperial, put to the House of Commons the question "Why, if there is to be a statue in Westminster Abbey —why should it not be erected in commemoration of some great and glorious Englishman," one answer rose to the lips of gentlemen, of whatever political creed. The spontaneous reply was monosyllabic. It was in brief "Briggs," and in the twinkling

of an eye the chamber became resonant with the sound. “Briggs! Briggs!” gentlemen shouted, whilst the member for Blackburn, having honour thus unexpectedly thrust upon him, stood blushing and smiling, oddly reminiscent of the Fat Boy in “Pickwick” what time he discovered Mr. Tupman making love to the spinster aunt in the arbour at Dingley Dell. It seemed a singularly appropriate conclusion, for since the Major is no more among us, there is none so great in the House as Mr. Briggs, whilst his oratorical power irresistibly claims for itself the epithet glorious.

Mr. Briggs first made his mark in the House of Commons on an early summer morning, now, as he would say, three years dead. It was on the occasion when Mr. Biggar and Mr. Parnell also distinguished themselves by keeping the House in session all night. It was five o’clock in the morning. The gas had been turned out, and the fresh sunlight was staring in through the windows, flushed with surprise at finding the House of Commons still sitting. Every one was tired, and worn, and weary. The fun of the thing had long since palled, and a stage had been reached akin to that in which at the Agricultural Hall about the same time the pedestrian Weston, in a condition of semi-sensibility, was doggedly walking round towards the ultimate lap. Into this mournful assembly Mr. Briggs suddenly burst, fresh and radiant as the sun itself. Like a sensible man, he had been agreeably spending the evening, and, accidentally passing the House, looked in. No one who formed part of the melancholy assembly will forget the sudden inspiration of his presence, his cheery face, his contagious good humour, and the beautiful poetry he recited.

He instantly established himself as a favourite in the House of Commons, and has since well sustained his character. He is known as a shrewd man of business, a sturdy Liberal of the type often produced in the North of England, and as gifted with a mind in which amid quotations of the prices of cotton and rates of freight for calico goods *f.o.b.*, there is stored a singular miscellaneous collection of scraps of poetry, shining like a handful of violets or a bunch of lilies that have somehow found their way into the dust and noise of a cotton mill. Mr. Briggs to-night dropped into poetry much less frequently than might have been expected from the man and theme. We had “Hecuba,”

it is true, but nothing lyrical. On the other hand, his prose was often metrical, as for example, when with a sweep of his arm, he indicated "the Goddess of Victory herself sailing through air over the armies of the first Napoleon."

This was too much for a plain man like Mr. M'Coan, who had come down anxious to vote against anything that savoured of Imperialism, and who, feeling that this moving picture of the Goddess of Victory sailing in the air was not relevant, had a dim notion, from what he remembered of picture galleries, that it was hardly decent. He put it to the Speaker whether the goddess had anything to do with the motion, a delicate matter on which Mr. Brand declined to offer an opinion, and Mr. Briggs proceeded.

It was now that he burst forth with the question recorded above, and swiftly answered with the jubilant shout of "Briggs! Briggs!" When the noise had subsided, he, gently deprecating the honour, explained that he had meant Oliver Cromwell, which brought up Mr. O'Donnell with inquiry "whether the hon. member was in order in mentioning in terms of commendation the butcher of Wexford." Matters were now getting a little mixed. Mr. Briggs felt that there might be something in Mr. M'Coan's objection, for he certainly had alluded to the Goddess of Victory. But he had not said anything that the most highly-cultured ingenuity might torture into depreciation of a West Irish tradesman. Moreover, Mr. O'Donnell did not represent Wexford. If any butcher of that town had been aggrieved it was for Mr. Redmond to call him to order. These thoughts surged through Mr. Briggs' mind in confused order, driving before them and more than ever mixing up the rates for forward delivery, the prices current for middlings, and one of Wordsworth's sonnets which he had intended to quote about this time—that one beginning

"Jones! when from Calais southward you and I  
Travelled on foot together."

The one thing clear was that things were not going very well. The House was laughing when it should have wept, and friends of the cause like Mr. M'Coan, having no poetry in their souls, were wanting to know about the resolution. So, after a vain attempt to complete a picturesque description of "the scene

at the disturbed kraal, the repose in the noontide heat, the sudden attack and the flight," Mr. Briggs abruptly reached his motion, having, for the space of upwards of an hour, strewn the floor of the House with wreaths of poesy.

Another orator. This was a fine speech; but it is doubtful whether it quite equalled the oration delivered a little later by Mr. Cavendish Bentinck. Perhaps it would be best to admit there were no points of comparison between the two save in respect of their common oratorical merits. If Mr. Briggs was poetical, Mr. Cavendish Bentinck was practical. A little haze surrounded his precise meaning and intent, though it was clear that it had something to do with the Dean of Westminster, the First Commissioner of Works, Westminster Abbey, some other cathedrals, and many other deans. When, an hour later, Sir Stafford Northcote came to allude to this oration he discovered in it a tendency towards the disestablishment of the English Church, and as he was sitting close to Mr. Bentinck, and might have caught those lapsed syllables which did not travel beyond a limited circle, he speaks with peculiar authority. Whatever the right hon. gentleman was advocating, he was moved by deepest conviction. He had evidently hurried down to the House, and was a little breathless when he found an opportunity of rising. His general appearance was oddly suggestive of his having, in his haste to do his duty, submitted to be dragged through a hedge backwards. Hence his rumpled hair, his chequered shirt front, and, to use a favourite expression of Mrs. Poyser, his generally "tumbled" look. Even with his temper further shortened by difficulties with such words as "unprejudiced," "religious," "ecclesiastical," and, above all, "statistical," the natural geniality of Mr. Bentinck's character manifested itself.

One thing clear amid much that was mixed was that he had some difference with the Dean of Westminster. But it was not for him, therefore, to imagine evil things of the dean, who was looking down upon him from the gallery with benignant smile.

"The Dean," said Mr. Cavendish Bentinck, "sometimes differs from me, but I do not mean to say that he may not be right."

The House of Commons, always ready to acknowledge true liberality of sentiment, loudly cheered this noble speech, the

interruption lasting long enough for Mr. Bentinck, in the meanwhile, to have privately completed within his own mind the particular line of thought which led up to the observation, and, accordingly, when silence was restored he began on quite a new subject. On the whole, his speech maintained that high level of oratorical excellence which seems so easy and yet is so difficult. Mr. Cavendish Bentinck might without doubt, if he had pleased, made one of three to soar with Mr. Briggs and the Goddess of Victory in circumambient air. He preferred to maintain the less ambitious but really more effective colloquial style. Mr. Gladstone at one period catching his eye, he turned towards the right hon. gentleman, and, apparently forgetful of the existence of every one else in the House, personally addressed himself to him, with one hand under his coat-tail pocket, and the other extended after the favourite manner of Mr. Pickwick. But Mr. Bentinck could upon occasion be quite otherwise than bland, as Mr. Cross found, when he not only presumed to differ from Her Majesty's late Judge-Advocate-General, but ventured audibly to express dissent. Whereupon Mr. Bentinck turned upon him and, emphasising his remarks with much movement of the scroll of paper, held *bâton*-wise in his right hand, vivaciously addressed him, continuing the conversation till the Speaker rose, and in gravest manner reminded him of the rule which requires that all observations must be addressed to the Chair.

July 19. — Mr.  
Gladstone  
takes the helm.

The profoundest depths of Mr. Gladstone's nature have been touched by the opposition which the Compensation for Disturbances Bill meets in the House of Commons. He was at bay to-night, and, quite apart from consideration of politics, the spectacle was worth beholding. It is the opinion of those who have been familiar with Mr. Gladstone's work through many years, that he is only now reaching the prime of his powers. One gets tired of recording that his latest speech excelled those that have gone before. But to listeners it seems perfectly true.

It must be owned that the circumstances in which the Government found themselves to-night demanded extraordinary effort. Mr. Forster lives upon the reputation of the skill with which he piloted the Education Bill through Committee. There appears reason to believe that this source of livelihood will not

long withstand the daily strain arising out of this unfortunate Bill. Whether the Bill is a good or a bad one is a fair matter for controversy. But there is no reason for question as to the quality of its management. This has been a series of mistakes from the day when Mr. Forster, evidently unconscious of the importance of the measure, proposed to introduce it as a clause in the Relief Bill, down to to-night, when, within a space of twenty minutes, he uncompromisingly declared to stand by an important amendment, and then abandoned it. Friendly critics explain the position by the statement that Mr. Forster has not had time to make himself acquainted with the necessities and conditions of the country he has been called upon to govern. Unfriendly critics add that complaisant self-sufficiency prevents him from acquiring the necessary information. There are stories current, which may not be true but are certainly persistent, of his somewhat brusque dismissal of authorities on Irish affairs (including two members of the Royal Commission on Agriculture) who have ventured to offer him some information on particular points. However this may be, it is an indisputable fact that at particular periods Mr. Forster must have been in the wrong, since on one night he argues in favour of an amendment, and on the next night declaims with equal energy in favour of a course absolutely opposed to it.

It was when Mr. Forster was smarting under the lively attack of Mr. Gibson that the Premier roused himself, and began to assume the personal direction of the Bill, which he did not surrender for the rest of the long sitting. Having lustily sworn he would ne'er extend the limits of rental fixed by the Bill to £50, Mr. Forster had now consented. The Opposition were in a mood of boisterous merriment at his expense, and Mr. Gibson, who is rapidly rising to the position of leader of the debates on the front Opposition bench, was making an effective speech, not difficult to do in the particular circumstances. Mr. Forster himself was played out. His now familiar and indignantly-expressed denial of change of front was received with shouts of laughter. This would not have been borne if the Ministerialists had shown any signs of supporting him; but they sat sullen and silent, never at any time caring for the Bill, and now resenting the discredit brought upon the Government and the party by its mismanage-

ment. It seemed a hopeless task for any man to reunite the Ministerialists, inspire them with enthusiasm, beat down the boisterous insolence of the other side, and turn an ignominious defeat into the semblance of a brilliant victory.

Yet all this Mr. Gladstone did in a speech of less than half-an-hour's duration. By the sheer might of genius and the force of lofty character, he lifted the debate far above the reach alike of Mr. Gibson and Mr. Forster. He proved that what looked uncommonly like expediency was really due to deference to the noblest and most generous sentiment. The Government were legislating for the peace of Ireland, and to preserve the tranquillity of the country. In such circumstances they were bound to do much to gain the support of the representatives of Ireland, so far as such gain was consistent with the maintenance of the primary purposes of the Bill. To that extent they were anxious to gain Irish support.

"We shall," he said, turning full on Mr. Gibson, "gain nothing from the right hon. gentleman opposite, who comes out with a flood of indignation, which he pours upon us." Unconsciously the art of the orator was marvellously displayed in the sonorous tones in which this phrase, "a flood of indignation," was spoken. You could almost hear in it the sound of many waters.

It was really ludicrous to hear Sir Stafford Northcote following the Premier. The magnificent burst of indignation to which the House had just listened seemed to have literally terrified the placid leader of the Opposition. The contrast between his manner and the Premier's was scarcely more marked than the difference between his tone and that of his colleague, the truculent ex-Attorney-General for Ireland. Sir Stafford almost apologised for the iniquity which the Premier charged against his party, and, in brief made a speech which, conspicuously feeble by comparison with what had gone before, was actually below the ordinary level of the right hon. gentleman's addresses. The young lions below the gangway were in a state of speechless disgust. They had called upon their leader to come and curse Mr. Gladstone for them, and, instead of cursing him altogether, he was doing something little short of altogether blessing him. As indiscipline on the Opposition benches has not yet reached the development when it would be

possible to hunt down their own leader, the young lions showed their contempt for Sir Stafford Northcote by ostentatiously leaving the House, a movement to which they were the more impelled by the circumstance that it was feeding time.

July 27. — Questions and answers.

The other day Mr. Joseph Cowen made a suggestion even the partial adoption of which has done more to expedite public business than has followed upon debates and deliberations of select committees formally devoted to that end. Mr. Cowen proposed that members should forego the pleasure of reading out the questions which they had placed on the paper. The Speaker, on being consulted, said there was no compulsion in the matter, though the custom had been established. He might usefully have added that the custom is of very recent birth. Previous to the epoch of the late Parliament it was an exceedingly rare thing for a member to read out the terms of his question. There is, of course, no reason that he should do so. It is set forth, often at great length upon the printed orders, a copy of which is in every member's hand. In the last Parliament some members, who rather fancied their literary composition, and loved the sound of their own voices, thought it would be an agreeable thing to recite the terms of their question. Others followed suit, and in a short time it became the regular thing. So firmly was the custom established that when a session or two later a member occasionally reverted to the old formula of "Asking the question which stands in my name," he was greeted by cries of "Read, read!" and the well-meant effort was abandoned.

The old custom is now on a fair way to be re-established, only a few members feeling it necessary in the interests of the State that they should occupy the time of the House by reciting aloud the terms of a question to the exposition of which they had devoted much anxious thought. The practical result on an average batch of questions is a saving of nearly an hour, a most valuable gain at this period of the sitting. It was not too soon to speak since the habit of putting questions has increased, is increasing, and must sternly be diminished. There is no easier way of letting a watchful constituency know that its member is awake than to draw up a question addressed to some Cabinet

Minister—the Prime Minister for preference. Some members, carrying the weakness to almost criminal lengths, positively rise and publicly give notice of their intention on a particular day to put a certain question, not a syllable of which they spare an indifferent House.

The House of Commons is exceedingly chary of sanctioning alterations in its rules. But here, surely, is one easy of application, and upon which it is difficult to believe any difference of opinion can arise. There is no earthly use, save to minister to vanity, in publicly giving notice of a question. In respect of an intended motion there may, on very rare occasions, be some excuse for standing in the way of public business while the terms of the notice are recited. On a motion other members may be inclined to take part in a discussion. Possibly they would not have complained if they had been obliged to wait till the following morning brought their copy of the orders with the notice of motion set forth in print. Still a member may be justified in publicly and specially calling attention to his proposed action. In the matter of questions no such condition exists. Only one man, the Minister addressed, will have to take part in the conversation. He will not set about making inquiry the same night, and will be well content to find the notice on the paper which it is his duty to examine every morning. Since the House has shown itself amenable to plain common sense in the matter of reading the questions, perhaps it might on easy compulsion feel inclined formally to disown this added and altogether indefensible waste of time.

An Irish Post-mistress. It is amongst the Irish members that the art of  
verbosely putting an unimportant question has  
reached its fullest development. There is a postmistress in Ire-  
land who is responsible for the loss of an appreciable proportion  
of the time of the House of Commons. This functionary is  
stationed at Ballygainesduff, sometimes at Ballybillyduff, some-  
times at Ballygrantduff. But wherever she be she is always in  
trouble. She has been dismissed, or her salary has not been raised,  
or a hole has manifested itself in the thatched roof, and the  
niggardly Government directing affairs from London declines to  
recognise its responsibility in the matter. Then the postmistress  
writes to her local member or, failing him, to Mr. Biggar, and

straightway notice is given of a prodigious question, which is printed on the orders, read by the member in charge, answered in detail by the Minister, and frequently supplemented by notice, that in consequence of the unsatisfactory answer, a motion on the subject will be moved on going into Committee of Supply. In Mr. Biggar's hands Mr. John Clare, who has some claim on the Admiralty, was good for at least twenty-eight working hours of the available number in the Session. Another rich mine for this kind of delving is found in the charges delivered by Irish Judges of Assize. If there were no other means of information the public would always know when the assizes commenced in Ireland by the appearance among questions in the House of Commons of long quotations. These go a considerable way; and, failing them and Mr. John Clare, there is always the post-mistress.

The universal adoption of Mr. Cowen's suggestion with the initiation of a rule prohibiting the public recital of notices would add some whole days to the working hours of the Session. The desirable reform would be complete if Ministers did their share in the way of caring for economy of time. From the best and most commendable motives Ministers, with a single exception, have acquired the habit of making speeches when answering questions. The exception is in the case of Sir Charles Dilke, who night after night shows how questions of the widest interest may be fully and satisfactorily answered in the narrowest limits of speech. It may be accepted as a general statement that no question put to a departmental Minister can exceed in interest those addressed to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Whence it appears that if Sir Charles Dilke can fulfil all requirements in from two to eight sentences, no necessity lies on any of his colleagues to extend their remarks.

The principal offender in this respect is Mr. Fawcett, who, if his remarks were reported verbatim, would frequently claim a column of the morning newspaper for his answer to some simple question affecting his department. Mr. Childers is only less diffuse; and even Lord Hartington, a statesman not given to speech-making, has found it necessary to enter at great length into comparatively unimportant matters submitted to him in the form of questions. This obviously arises from anxiety not to seem to shirk the inquiry, and to show that everything in the

particular department concerned is open and above board. This is an excellent disposition in its way, but it is plainly not compatible with the discharge of business. One night within the last fortnight, whilst yet it was the custom to read every word of the question, half-past six had struck before the questions on the paper were disposed of—an unprecedented thing in cases where the course of questions had not been interrupted by a motion for adjournment.

The Root of the Evil. Doubtless a Ministry forms its habits in this matter from the example of its chief. In the late Government the bent of the Premier's genius lay in the direction of epigram. He justly prided himself on his skill in giving the brief answer that turneth away the inconvenient questioner. His example was followed by his colleagues, and the highest success was conceived to have been reached by the briefest answer. Mr. Gladstone's genius takes another direction. He has an embarrassment of riches in the way of words, and pours them forth ungrudgingly in answer to the most insignificant question. His colleagues, in some measure perhaps insensibly, follow his example, and at the very outset of a sitting a tone of diffuseness is given to the proceedings which operates disastrously throughout the night. Apart from considerations of wasted time, these carefully-elaborated answers to unimportant questions work evil. The Minister, by his painstaking candour and minute consideration, lifts the trumpery question to an importance which it would not obtain on its merits. It is a fact sometimes bluntly set forth by harried Ministers that if information were the whole object of the question it would be better obtained by personal application at the office concerned in the matter. Of course, it would be absurd to look for a time when this fact should be acknowledged in practice. But for the flourishing condition of the practice of taking up the time of the House by putting trivial questions Ministers who respond to them in lengthy answer are largely to blame.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FOURTH PARTY.

The Agricultural Member—Mr. Duckham—Mr. Howard—Lord Elcho—The Brothers Bright—The Brothers Harcourt—Unwonted Silence—The Fourth Party—Open Revolt—Mr. Chaplin trapped—Mr. Bright and the Conservatives—The Hicks Oration—The Biters bitten—Mr. Arthur Balfour—Mr. Beresford Hope—Lord Hartington.

July 30. — The agricultural member. A great mistake in tactics was made when the oppressed agriculturist sent Mr. James Howard to the House of Commons as his representative.

Every one admits that the case of the British farmer, always a bad one, is just now particularly distressing. He has scarcely any money to pay the reduced rent demanded of him by commiserating landlords, and his hopes of relief by the promised fine harvest of this year are dashed by perpetual rain. But how is the House of Commons to believe in the depression of agriculture when this portly personage, with a face like the rising sun, makes moan on its behalf? Mr. Howard would do admirably for Father Christmas in a *tableau vivant*, or, with the addition of a very small pillow, might strut the stage as Sir John Falstaff. But the distressed agriculturist is entirely out of his line.

Mr. Duckham. Mr. Duckham is much better qualified for the part. The member for Herefordshire, in addressing the House on behalf of the down-trodden farmer, has precisely the manner suited to the occasion and the cause. His face, his figure, and his dress, all betoken some deep-rooted sorrow for which members search in vain in the brief record of his personal history supplied by the indispensable *Dod*. Amongst other details to be read, it is stated that "Mr. Duckham married in 1845." But that is by no means an unusual circumstance, and cannot be held to explain the depression that broods over the member for Herefordshire. He has studied oratory in the Conventicle, and the Gamaliel at whose feet he sat must have been very powerful in funeral sermons.

Mr. Howard. Mr. Howard presents a curious contrast to his colleague for Herefordshire. He is as jolly as the other is sad. When he stands up and beams upon the Speaker, by way of intimating that he would like, if perfectly agreeable, to "catch his eye," there seems diffused about the Chamber a subtle perfume of the roast beef of Old England, and the right hand is involuntarily stretched out to grasp the flagon of home-brewed ale that must surely be somewhere in reach. Speech-making is rather a serious undertaking for Mr. Howard—probably the only thing calculated to depress his spirits, and bring a swift April cloud over the sunshine of his countenance. He seems to compose an oration somewhat after the fashion that he would construct a plough or a threshing machine. It is all in parts, each carefully fashioned and distinct in itself. When each is completed they are tied together and brought down to the House like those portable boats his firm export for the navigation of the inland rivers of Africa. Mr. Howard is not the sort of man to hurry himself in any undertaking. Having probably spent a few weeks in fashioning the various parts of his speech, bundling them together and bringing them down to the House on a light hand-cart, he next sets about the worse than piscatorial enterprise of catching the Speaker's eye.

Whilst Mr. Biggar was yet new to legislative life he had a habit of holding out his hat at arm's length in the direction of the Chair, signalling the Speaker much as he would hail a cab. Mr. Howard, in something of the same way, holds out the unbound sections of his speech, the while he beams upon the right hon. gentleman in the Chair. But he is frequently a little late in the race so keenly run in the new Parliament. It sometimes happens that of twenty claimants the Speaker has selected one who is already some way through his first sentence before Mr. Howard is fairly on his legs, and has embarked upon his process of semaphore signalling. It is true that he makes up for this, inasmuch as, being the last to rise, he is the last to go, standing well out on the floor, and beaming with somewhat saddened intensity as he finds this fresh opportunity gone.

But his time comes at length, and he is in no hurry to hasten his flight. Being once in possession of the floor, he gets well out

towards the middle of it, and with legs set wide apart so as to make the base firmer, he prepares to unpack his speech. This he does with sundry preliminary shrugs of the shoulder and movements of the arms, after the fashion of wrestlers when balancing themselves on their feet preparatory to taking a grip. At first, members watching these movements, thought Mr. Howard was about to take off his coat, and probably turn up his sleeves before setting to. They had plenty of time to think of many things before he had completed the process of unpacking and had commenced the more delicate work of putting the speech together from the sections held in his hand. Fortunately, he had to-night the whole of the front bench below the gangway to himself, with the exception of a portion of the extreme edge of the seat occupied by Mr. Thomassen, who had brought his ear-trumpet down, and was sitting well forward, waiting to hear how distressed the agriculturist really was. An evident perplexity stole over the face of the member for Bolton as he sat for several moments waiting, but hearing no sound. The horrible suspicion that must have crossed his mind as he shifted his trumpet was presently dispersed when the rope that bound the sections of the speech was finally cut, neatly coiled away, and Mr. Howard actually began his speech.

As he advanced with the delivery of his remarks, he, being nothing if not methodical, laid the sheets of notes upon the bench, beginning at the end by the gangway. He had soon covered that portion, and then began to retreat on Mr. Thomassen and the door, planting out as he went his sheets of notes on the bench as if they were young cabbages. It was pretty to see him backing down with the accumulated notes before him, and behind him the skilfully retreating figure of Mr. Thomassen, with one hand to his ear-trumpet and both eyes on the portly figure with which he was retreating *pari passu*. By the time Mr. Howard's great oration was completed, Mr. Thomassen had got as far as the cross benches, with Mr. Howard close on his toes, and the broad bench was strewn with sections of the speech.

Lord Elcho. Perhaps the debate was more remarkable for the speeches that were not delivered than for those actually spoken. Of these was Mr. Chaplin's. Hares and rabbits combined to form a subject on which the House

might well expect to hear that gentleman's voice. But he was not even present. In his absence Lord Elcho did much to make amends for any number of unanswered speeches. The new Parliament has seen a marked revival in the staying powers of the noble lord whom Haddingtonshire preserves to the House of Commons. He has this Session spoken oftener, longer, and less to the purpose than any member of the House. When on his legs he is a perfect Abyssinian well in respect of fluency; only it is a House that is bored. Unlike Mr. Howard, Lord Elcho probably does not prepare his speeches, at least they bear no evidence of coherent design. In respect of addressing an audience there is, as Mr. Russell Lowell wittily said last night at the Savage Club dinner, "a good deal in the spur of the moment; but the result depends very much on the flank of the animal into which you dig it." The result in Lord Elcho's case is not altogether satisfactory. He is heavily humorous, weakly witty, audaciously illogical, and carries personal references to a length which comes nearer the verge of positive rudeness than any other man in the House. To-night he chattered on, magpie fashion, for the space of an hour, his speech being so conveniently arranged that he might with equal effect have begun at the end and have gone on to the beginning; or have commenced in the middle and have worked laterally either right or left.

Aug. 6. — The assumption made that among Parliamentary brothers Bright. orators and great politicians there is only one Bright and only one Harcourt was triumphantly refuted to-night. By an odd coincidence Mr. Jacob Bright followed Colonel Harcourt in debate. With respect to the member for Manchester, it must be said that whilst the voice is certainly the voice of Jacob the style of oratory is not John's.

The brothers  
Harcourt.

The difference between the brothers Harcourt is not less strikingly marked, but rests on different grounds. In the matter of soundness of view and clearness of perception it would be a rash thing to assert that Colonel Harcourt stands below the personage whom he last night distantly alluded to as "my right hon. relative the Home Office." Colonel Harcourt's mind is like the mill of God, inasmuch as it grinds slow. He will take a week to arrive at a

conclusion at which his relative would jump at a single bound. He sits silent for hours in the House, ruminating on many matters, more particularly on the convulsion of nature that has made it possible for a Harecourt not only to bring in a Hares and Rabbits Bill, but trueulently to talk of abolishing the Game Laws. Like the parrot of transpontine fame, he does not speak much, but he thinks the more. To-night the attack upon what Sir Walter Barttelot, with subtle emphasis, spoke of as “our flocks and our herds,” stirred the sluggish depths of his soul. He determined, at whatever cost, to speak, and went at it as in his earlier years he would have gone at a stiff fence or an ugly ditch.

For greater accuracy he had written out his speech in a small account-book, suspiciously like that the milkman insists upon leaving once a week. Whilst Mr. Arnold had been speaking he had been furtively studying the milk-book. Thus, when the time came, he was prepared to go off at a canter, which he did, starting on a high note, and rapidly running off the successive sentences. He made no secret of the existence of the milk-book, or of its necessity to the due delivery of his speech. He went on as long as memory would carry him with the milk-book held behind his back. When memory required prompting he brought the volume out to the front, held it at due distance with both hands, got the cue, and then went on again till pulled up by a fault in his memory. In spite of these little eccentricities, the sound sense and the full knowledge which underlay the speech were unmistakable. There were also among the items in the milk-book two or three sentences of an epigrammatic turn that would not have done discredit to his “right hon. relative the Home Office.”

Unwonted silence. It is a remarkable fact, and a final proof of the comparative frailty even of the most perfect development of human nature, that the Fourth Party felt themselves incompetent to take part in this debate. Mr. Gorst, whom we always like to think knows everything, judiciously stopped away when the subject under discussion was the meat supply. Sir Henry Wolff came in for a few moments, but seized an early opportunity, when he thought no one was looking, of casually strolling out. Only Lord Randolph Churchill remained at his

post, elegantly reclining on the corner seat below the gangway, regarding with complacency (which the House had full opportunity of sharing if so minded) a dainty dress shoe, the latchet of which, it is honestly believed at Blenheim House, Mr. Forster is not worthy to unloose. Lord Randolph sat there all night, toying with his moustache, and alternately admiring either shoe. This talk about the beesves of Texas was, he tacitly admitted, a little beyond him. If he ever turned his great mind on the meat supply of London it had taken the direction of vaguely surmising that the cow he has seen milked at the foot of the steps by the Duke of York's Column was, somehow or other, connected with it. Perhaps when it died, or began to yield buttermilk instead of cream, it was killed, and so Lord Randolph and the rest of London were supplied with the juicy beefsteak and the nutritious fillet. Taken as a rule it cannot be alleged against the young men composing the Fourth Party that the fact of their absolute ignorance of a subject prevents them from delivering judgment upon it. But, from whatever reason, the fact remains that on the question of the meat supply, with its abstruse references to tests for pleuro-pneumonia, the Fourth Party was silent, and the astonished planet undirected blundered on through space.

The Fourth Party. It is, by the way, a noteworthy circumstance that the Fourth Party should consist of three persons, though it finds a parallel in the case of the *Tiers Parti*, whose birth was announced by Mr. O'Donnell in the early days of the Session, and which has been found to consist of only one. But the Fourth Party makes up for lack of numbers in versatility of genius and indomitable perseverance. It is a great tribute to the character of Lord Randolph Churchill that he should have surrounded the party with a halo of youth. Mr. Gorst is no chicken, and Sir Henry Wolff is now somewhat of a middle-aged youth. Lord Randolph is only just turned thirty, and even in his most solemn moments, when he is not only demonstrating that Mr. Gladstone is wrong, but is proving that Sir Stafford Northcote is not right, he never looks older. In regarding this great political party we are perhaps, insensibly impressed by the legal knowledge of Mr. Gorst, and the diplomatic subtlety of Sir Henry Wolff. But, upon analysis, it will be found that the prevailing sentiment is one of youth, as of boys playing at

politics, and in their undisciplined revels plucking the beards of grave and reverend seigneurs.

This is, perhaps, doing an injustice to the Fourth Party. The trinity of statesmen who compose it doubtless are very much in earnest, and do not regard politics either as an instrument of advancing private ambition, or of gratifying a constitutional inclination towards practical jokes. They feel that they have a duty to perform which must be carried out at whatever sacrifice of other people's feelings. Sir Stafford Northcote has his notions of the manner of conducting Her Majesty's Opposition. Some people call it honourable, creditable, and in accordance with the traditions of English gentlemen. Others (three others) may think it spiritless and dull. The Fourth Party at one time had some hope of converting their titular leaders. Having made a slip early in the session by seconding the Ministerial proposal for a Select Committee on the Bradlaugh case, Sir Stafford was educated up to the point of going right round, and, with suspiciously spasmodic show of energy and indignation, he protested against the action of the Government. But when, a few nights ago, Sir Henry Wolff made that brilliant attack on the Ministry, accusing them of a breach of order in having left the House without voting after the question had been put a second time, Sir Stafford Northcote took a course which showed that his case is quite hopeless. Like every one else in the House, with the exception of the Fourth Party, he had seen that Ministers had left before the question was put a second time. That was a matter he could not help. It was to be regretted; but it is not given to every one to see anything they please in the conduct of a political adversary. Where Sir Stafford Northcote hopelessly blundered was in volunteering his testimony to the confusion of his own side and the triumph of the enemy.

*Open revolt.* Since that day the Fourth Party have formally cut themselves adrift, even from semblance of submission to the lead of the front bench. They never consulted it, and now they flout it, missing no opportunity of sneering at good Sir Stafford, and of—as they did in the Budget debate—extolling his great master and rival in finance. To-night, just on the close of the morning sitting, they took a formal step which may have further development before the Session is much older.

Finding the front Opposition bench vacant, save for the presence of Colonel Taylor, they descended upon it in a body, and with fresh vigour confronted Ministers. So exhilarating upon the mind of Lord Randolph was this new position that he embarked upon an indiscriminate course of opposition. It was close upon seven o'clock, but in the long list of measures on the orders there were some that might, with important effect, have been advanced a stage. It was proposed that such advance should be made, but Lord Randolph was inexorable, and, amid wild cheers from Mr. Warton, he objected to everything. The scene lasted only a few minutes, but they were the happiest of Mr. Warton's legislative life. When he first entered the House he took up his position immediately behind the Ministers, as being a convenient one from which to take snuff. From force of habit he sits and snuffs there yet. But his eyes turn wistfully towards the front bench below the gangway, where sits the highest embodiment of his views of statesmanship. It only needs the holding up of a finger in order to make the Fourth Party actually four.

Aug. 10. — Mr. Chaplin was in great force during the earlier Chaplin trapped. part of the night; but about eleven o'clock his onward course—highly pleasing to himself and conducive to the private conviction that he is not only a powerful Parliamentary debater but an able politician—received a sudden and ludicrous check. It is part of the policy of the opponents of the Hares and Rabbits Bill to represent the measure as calculated, when passed, to send to the dogs this Empire of old renown. Mr. Chaplin, who in fact invented this particular argument, is never tired of saying that the principle of the Bill is so disastrous that if it is to be accepted it is idle to discuss details. To-night he forlornly gave up pheasants, and, travestying a famous phrase (that was never used), cried "Perish Partridges."

"If," he said (shaking portentous forefinger at the smiling Home Secretary), "you have the slightest vestige of sincerity, you should extend this Bill to winged game."

Hereupon the impressive speech of the member for Mid-Lincolnshire was broken in upon by mocking cries of "Move, move!" which, being translated from Parliamentary language, conveyed the injunction that he should move to extend the Bill

in that direction, counting upon the support of members opposite.

There is one thing fatal to Mr. Chaplin's solemn and impressive oratory, and it is a flippant interruption like this. Instead of being abashed by the dreadful prospect opened up before them, here was a light-hearted majority suggesting that he himself should take the initiative of bringing about a condition of affairs which his own disordered fancy had pictured for their perturbation. The effect was something like what would have followed if Lochiel, warned "to beware of the day when the Lowlands shall meet him in battle array," had turned upon the impressive person in the mantle, and recklessly "chaffed" him. Mr. Chaplin, discomfited, hastily resumed his seat.

Presently he was up again, and was led by his fervour into a fresh and deeper pit. Dr. Farquharson moved an amendment bringing within scope of the Bill unenclosed lands of less than fifty acres. This was a very serious limitation of those concessions which the Home Secretary, wisely or unwisely, had devised for the pacification of the landlords. The Conservatives were contemptuously aghast at this proposition, and having full faith in the steadfastness of the Home Secretary, declined even to discuss it. Mr. Courtney's advocacy of it gave them fresh hope, since Mr. Courtney is an able gentleman, whose approval of a particular proposition in the House of Commons is about the worst thing that could befall it. Mr. Chaplin rose, and once more assuming the mantle of the seer, addressed Lochiel in a highly sarcastic manner.

"By all means adopt this amendment," said he; "nothing is bad enough or absurd enough for this Bill. For goodness sake, let us have this amendment, and as many more of the same kind as the evil imaginations of Radicals can suggest."

Then he sat down, chuckling softly to himself over this fine exhibition of the higher forms of irony. Sir William Harcourt saw his opportunity, and used it with a swiftness and a skill that literally brought down the House. He re-stated, with great gravity, the arguments used by Mr. Courtney, and supported by Mr. Chaplin, of whose ironical intent the Home Secretary appeared delightfully ignorant. He deplored the difficulties that beset him on all sides, and the necessity for frequently resisting amendments.

"But," he concluded, "in face of a combination like this, resistance would be impossible, and on the part of the Government I accept the amendment."

It would be easy to describe the ringing cheer that went up from the Ministerial benches and the peal of laughter that followed. But only the painter's brush could fairly illustrate the hopelessly crushed and, literally, limp look of Mr. Chaplin. On reflection he decided to brave it out, and since the Home Secretary had maliciously declined to see his joke he himself ignored its intention, and when the division was called went out and voted with the Government.

Aug. 16. — Mr. Bright and the Conservatives. For gentlemen in Opposition there is something cruel in the imperturbability of Lord Hartington, something aggravating in the blunt speech of Sir W. Harcourt, and something simply unbearable in the revived energy of Mr. Bright. Of all afflictions, this last is the hardest to bear. Mr. Gladstone is not given to interposing in speeches on particular policy general observations with respect to the character of his opponents. Sir William Harcourt is; but he shows himself susceptible to consequent uproar, and something is to be got by shouting at him. Mr. Bright, steeled by longer practice, and indifferent to clamour, which in gusts of greater or less intensity has hurtled round him these thirty years, is altogether unsatisfactory. It is not only what he says about good Conservatives, though that is sufficiently venomous. It is the tone of voice in which he drops his cheerful remarks, and the indescribable sense of utter contempt, that combine to make his interposition in Parliamentary debate inevitably conducive to sudden liveliness. In San Francisco there is a tailor who has made a fine business by a new way of taking a man's measurement. When the customer enters the shop the tailor places him on a pedestal, and, walking round him for a few minutes, carefully studies him before designing a suit of clothes. In the same way, though with less flattering meaning to the subject, Mr. Bright places the Tory upon a pedestal and walks round him, coolly reviewing all his angularities, and mercilessly describing them.

The dim impression one gets when listening to Mr. Bright analysing the *genus* Tory is that the subject is some stock or

stone that has no sense of hearing and no feelings to be touched. In the presence of a hundred people professing and calling themselves Conservatives, Mr. Bright analyses a Conservative with the perfect freedom and more than historic accuracy with which he might discuss a Jacobite or a Roundhead. The awkward sense that living people are being treated in this surgical manner in their presence is awakened by the peculiar use Mr. Bright makes of the second person plural. He will have none of the petty fiction that the unspeakably depraved persons he is discussing are imaginary, or are dead, or even have just left the room—the latter condition supplying a consecrated opportunity for saying nasty things of our acquaintance. There they sit right before him, and that there shall be no mistake, he, disregarding the injunction that all speech should be addressed to the Chair, turns upon them with a bitterly emphasised “*you*.” At such a time *you* did this; in such circumstances *you* did that; at the present time, if we would only let *you*, *you* would do anything equally bad. This use of the personal pronoun, emphasised by a contemptuous wave of the hand or a threatening shake of extended forefinger, is more than country gentlemen can bear in silence. It is the last ounce on the burden that breaks all patience, to note that, whilst he suffers the temporary drowning of his voice in the roar of execration that rises up from the opposite benches, Mr. Bright, standing calm and unmoved at the table, too evidently utilises the interval to polish a succeeding dart.

Aug. 19. — The Amongst memorable speeches delivered from the Hicks oration. Conservative benches on the Hares and Rabbits Bill, that of Mr. Hicks will ever retain a high place. Mr. Hicks, it must be admitted, lacks the full development of some qualities we are accustomed to associate with successful oratory. For example, he is not so fluent as Mr. Gladstone, so epigrammatic as Lord Beaconsfield, nor so fiery as Mr. Bright. His oratorical style, perhaps, a little errs on the side of deliberation. He has not been thirty years chairman of the Cambridgeshire Quarter Sessions for nothing. It has been his duty often to hear a prisoner or a witness cautioned not to incriminate himself, as what he now says will be taken down and may be used in evidence against him. This long

training has induced in the mind of Mr. Hicks a perhaps excessive caution, which led to somewhat ludicrous results in his memorable address to the House of Commons. He has, in fact, a habit of illumining his speech with prolonged flashes of silence, and members in other parts of the House, accepting these as proof that he had brought his remarks to a conclusion, were tonight constantly popping up intent upon catching the Speaker's eye.

What they caught instead was Mr. Hicks's eye, a by no means pleasant catch when, as happened on this occasion, it was aflame with indignant anger. The truth is, that after a recurrence of the momentous pause that had early broken the flow of the speech something like a titter was heard from the benches opposite. On a second repetition of the solemn silence Mr. Hicks could not resist the conviction that the House was laughing at him, a circumstance that certainly had not happened for thirty years. It is no wonder that, combined with the severe mental exercise necessary for sustaining the flow of his speech, the shock of this conviction should have somewhat mixed his impression of current events, and led him to form erroneous conclusions as to the intentions of gentlemen who were popping up in all directions like grouse out of the heather. To see Mr. Hicks slowly turn round and confront these gentlemen, his very moustache bristling with anger, added fuel to the flame of hilarity in which the House was enveloped. The unfortunate intruders, mostly new members anxious to work off their maiden speeches, had honestly thought that since Mr. Hicks has said nothing for several seconds he had nothing more to say, and had merely forgotten to sit down. They slunk slowly back into their places under the glare of the eye of the Chairman of the Cambridgeshire Quarter Sessions, while he, swinging slowly round and with one sweeping glance that should have annihilated the laughing crowd on the benches opposite, proceeded with the utmost deliberation to fish up his notes, and consider what he should say next.

Mr. Hicks had gone into the matter *ab ovo*. In the course of his judicial career in Cambridgeshire he had observed that evil always has small beginnings. In his charges to the Grand Jury he has never missed an opportunity of inculcating the principle involved in the phrase, "nipping it in the bud." Applying this

principle to the Hares and Rabbits Bill, he would begin with the egg. It was quite true, as Mr. Bright subsequently pointed out, that hares and rabbits are not in the habit of laying eggs. That, however, was a mere detail, attractive enough for the sordid mind, but one over which the heaven-born legislator lightly soared. Mr. Hicks's notion—as far as it could be gathered amid the occasional articulation that followed the long silences of his speech—was that a record was to be kept of every egg laid, with date of the sale, name of purchaser, and subsequent history, the record to be supervised by some responsible person, probably the Chairman of Quarter Sessions for the county.

The Home Secretary subsequently assumed that each individual egg was to be marked; but that did not appear to form part of Mr. Hicks's scheme, which was on the whole, somewhat lacking in detail. Probably if he had had another day or two in which to conclude his speech, the whole matter would have been fully explained. But what with these over-anxious orators jumping up on all sides, what with the necessity incumbent upon him of staring them down into abashed retirement, what with the ribald laughter of gentlemen opposite, what with the propensity of his manuscript to come up wrong end first, and what with the careful manoeuvring of his coat-tails (which gave currency to the rumour that he had, after the manner of the professors at the Polytechnic, brought down a few eggs with intent to illustrate his lecture, and was afraid that in a moment of absence of mind he might sit down upon them), Mr. Hicks failed in obtaining that full opportunity of developing his great Egg Theory which would have made all clear.

An hour later in the sitting, the Speaker having called upon a gentleman on the opposite side of the House, Mr. Hicks was discovered standing at the corner seat below the gangway, whence he had made his great speech. He was now in the middle of another most eloquent pause, which was broken in upon by cries of "Order!" from the Radicals opposite, who were evidently terribly afraid that he must be about to conclude his dissertation on eggs, and, in some subtle way, prop up the Game Laws. It appeared, however, from a few fragmentary sentences which Mr. Hicks managed to utter above the uproar, that he was anxious to respond to what he called "the attack" made upon him by the Home Secretary. This had happened an

hour before, and was already forgotten. But Mr. Hicks's mind proceeds by orderly and deliberate stages. All this time, whilst the versatile House was attracted in other quarters, Mr. Hicks had been brooding over the flippant remarks of Sir. Wm. Harcourt, and now he was ready to answer them. But the assailants of the Game Laws stood by the point of order, and roared at the irate Hicks till, the Speaker interposing, he was feign to resume his seat, leaving the Home Secretary uncrushed.

Aug. 20. — The Young Men below the gangway caught a biters bitten. Tartar to-night. Their intention was good, and not without a certain grave humour. What they proposed to do was to raise an inquiry into the conditions under which, at this late period of the year, the House is still in Session, engaged upon important measures. To save trouble, they at the outset condemned the situation as "inexpedient," and, whilst fixing the responsibility on Her Majesty's Government, sought to pass upon them something like a vote of censure. The last touch of humour was given to the procedure by inveigling Mr. Arthur Balfour, and putting him up to move the resolution. To have Lord Randolph Churchill leading the attack, with whatever successful aspect of gravity, or that Mr. Gorst or Sir Henry Wolff should have done it, would have been to spoil the joke at the outset. Such a course would have been akin to the old-fashioned habit, much in force in the days of Douglas Jerrold, of italicising a witticism, so that the densest intelligence could not fail to know that there was a joke intended, even if it were not privileged to comprehend it.

Mr. Arthur Balfour. To put up Mr. Balfour was a stroke of genius which goes some way to relieve the Fourth Party from a conviction rather growing in the House this week that they are becoming a trifle dull. The member for Hertford is one of the most interesting young men in the House. He is not a good speaker, but he is endowed with the rich gift of conveying the impression that presently he will be a successful Parliamentary debater, and that in the meantime it is well that he should practise. He is a pleasing specimen of the highest form of the culture and good breeding which stand to the credit

of Cambridge University. He is not without desire to say hard things of the adversary opposite, and sometimes yields to the temptation. But it is ever done with such sweet and gentle grace, and is smoothed over by such earnest protestations of innocent intention, that the adversary rather likes it than otherwise. An additional interest is given to Mr. Balfour's Parliamentary appearances by his conjunction with his illustrious kinsman Mr. Beresford Hope. There is something delightfully touching in the mutual attitude of the older and the younger man. In the last Parliament they always sat together on the front bench below the gangway. In the present Parliament Mr. Beresford Hope, perhaps thinking that his dignity might a little suffer if he continued to form one of the group who hold the front bench against all comers, moved a little away. But it was only a ceremonious severance. He sits at the extreme corner of the front Opposition bench, with only the gangway between him and his young kinsman, who reclines with acrobatic grace on the corner seat on the front bench below the gangway. That is to say, he secures this seat when, as to-night, he is told off to address a listening Senate. On other occasions it is occupied, as beseems his position, by the distinguished leader of the Party.

Mr. Beresford Hope. Even on these occasions Mr. Balfour is not far off Mr. Beresford Hope. He could almost join hands with him across the gangway. He is ever within sound of the encouragement of his chuckle, and with intent to mould his own Parliamentary manner, can watch the graceful evolutions of his kinsman. As for Mr. Beresford Hope, the problem whether life is worth living is being decisively answered in the affirmative as it brings with it the privilege of hearing this budding statesman deferentially addressing the House of Commons. When Mr. Balfour is on his legs Mr. Beresford Hope does not trust himself to look at him, but his whole being is suffused with a sense of his presence. When he is not speaking, and emotion may be more surely kept within moderate bounds, he watches over him as a hen hovers around its last surviving fledgling. Entering the House a little late to-night, and finding Mr. Balfour had already commenced to speak, Mr. Hope, in his eagerness to get to his seat with the least possible

delay, so as not to lose an additional word of the discourse, outraged one of the elementary rules of Parliamentary etiquette. He passed between the orator and the Speaker. It was pretty to see him walking on tip-toe, and ducking his head as he passed the tall, slim young man who looked down upon him with fond smile, whilst members, always ready for a joke, filled the chamber with mock-angry cries of "Order, Order!" Of these Mr. Beresford Hope lightly recked, having reached the corner seat above the gangway, where he might bask in the presence of his young friend and drink in long draughts from the fountain of his eloquence. So with his chin sunk upon his chest, his eye-glass firmly fixed, he sat, and with huge chuckles enjoyed the outburst of indignation with which gentlemen opposite playfully overwhelmed him.

It is pleasing to linger over this touching episode which gilds the sober colours of Parliamentary life. It is the more agreeable since Mr. Balfour's gentle purring, and Mr. Beresford Hope's domestic felicity, were the prelude to a lively encounter in which hard blows were dealt from either side. The House, albeit it had sat through a long morning session, and was now at the end of a wearisome week, assembled in large numbers in anticipation of sport. The whole thing was a little entertainment, got up for the fagged legislators by those enterprising caterers and successful managers, the Young Men below the gangway. For the better enjoyment of the occasion everybody had dined, and it was tacitly acknowledged that evening dress was "indispensable." Even Sir Stafford Northeote, throwing aside his work-a-day garments, had come down in dinner dress. So had Lord Hartington and all his colleagues, with the exception of Mr. Bright and the Home Secretary.

**Lord Hartington.** Lord Hartington reasoned the matter out quietly and logically, answering the arguments of Mr. Balfour, and dealing with the whole matter as an abstract resolution. But presently it became clear that in drawing the sword he had thrown away the scabbard, and was not to be denied the opportunity of once for all grappling with the Young Men below the gangway. Nothing could be more perfect or crushing than his retort. Mr. Balfour had quietly inquired how it was that Parliament was on the 20th August engaged upon important

measures, and had answered it to his own satisfaction and to the audible approval of Mr. Beresford Hope by reference to the somewhat worn-out themes of the Bradlaugh controversy, and Mr. Forster's unfortunate Bill. Lord Hartington, having the question propounded to him, answered it in another and more practical way.

He showed, as the result of investigation conducted with the aid of the newspapers, that since the session had commenced Mr. Gorst had spoken 105 times, and asked 18 questions; Sir H. Wolff had spoken 68 times, and asked 34 questions; Lord Randolph Churchill had spoken 74 times, and asked 21 questions; Mr. Biggar had spoken 58 times, and asked 14 questions; Mr. Finigan had spoken 48 times, and asked 10 questions; Mr. Arthur O'Connor had spoken 55 times, "and," Lord Hartington added with a sigh of relief, "has asked only two questions."

These six members altogether had contributed 470 speeches, which, taking them at an average of ten minutes, amounted to sixty-eight hours, equal to one fortnight of the available time that the new Parliament had had at its disposal for the work of the nation. If the remaining 642 members had thought it necessary to speak as often, the work accomplished during the present session would have required 215 weeks, or something over four years. But as a session usually extends over six months, and the present one had not exceeded three, the figures led to the conclusion that in the ordinary session, where all the members equalled the activity of the members named, it would require a period of eight years to complete its work. This enumeration was received with shouts of laughter, which were renewed when Lord Hartington added that the speeches of the gentlemen named were avowedly made with the desire to assist the Government, and asked what would happen if six members of similar energy were to decide upon a course of obstruction? Returning to a more serious vein, he protested against the claim that these speeches were made in vindication of freedom of discussion. No words could be more grossly misapplied. It was freedom of discussion for the six members; but it was the enforced exclusion of the majority of the House from the rights of speech.

When the noble lord slowly approached the unfolding of his scheme of confutation, the House, going in advance of his

deliberate movements, recognised with hilarious bursts of laughter what was coming. The Fourth Party knew it also, and it was interesting to note the sudden preoccupation which clouded the ingenuous countenances of the gentlemen who, as Sir William Harcourt said, made up by the strength of their conviction for the smallness of their numbers. Lord Randolph Churchill, caught leaning forward watching, over the extended body of Mr. Balfour, the flow of Lord Hartington's speech, could not conveniently withdraw into a less prominent position; but he dropped his eyelids and nursed his knee with fresh and absorbing concern. Mr. Gorst suddenly became profoundly interested in the pattern of the stained glass, the shadows, the light in the roof. Sir Henry Wolff, who had brought in with him a copy of "Hansard," designed presently to confound some gentleman opposite, discovered on one of the pages matter that required instant and exclusive attention. All the while the House was roaring with laughter at the completeness of the strategy with which Lord Hartington had led the Fourth Party into an ambush, where they were entirely at his mercy.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### RETROSPECT.

Lord Beaconsfield in the Commons—A short Way with Amendments—About the House of Lords—Voices in the Lords—Lord Redesdale—"The noble Baronet"—Mr. Callan makes a Night of it—Mr. Gladstone Convalescent—Prorogation—Retrospect—The Fourth Party—Mr. Warton—Mr. Bright—Mr. Gladstone—Lord Hartington.

Aug. 25.—Lord Beaconsfield in the Commons to-day in the person of Lord Beaconsfield. The noble lord arrived at a quarter to five, and, entering the Peers' gallery, seated himself over the clock. His lordship was presently joined by Sir W. Harcourt, who held a long and animated conversation with him. Sir Stafford Northcote next arrived, and, the Home Secretary returning to the Treasury bench, remained some time in company with the

late Premier. Lord Beaconsfield displayed much interest in the House of Commons, more particularly in the new members, whom he inspected through an eye-glass held in hands daintily covered with lavender kid gloves.

Aug. 26.—A short <sup>way with</sup> An anonymous youth, presumably of humble birth, was made the subject of an interesting

conversation in the House of Lords to-night, and received the highest encomium from the leader of the House. Lord Beaconsfield stated that he proposed to move an amendment limiting the operations of the Employers' Liability Bill to a period of two years, and apologised for that notice not appearing on the paper. Whereupon Lord Redesdale explained that the noble earl had handed him the notice, and he had given it to the Queen's Printer's boy, who had put it in his pocket and forgotten all about it.

Earl Granville observed that this must be a very intelligent boy, for he had done the best possible thing with the amendment.

Aug. 27.—About <sup>the House of</sup> As often happens, wisdom cries aloud in the House of Lords, and there is none to hear. Lord

Denman is frequently observed standing up on a back bench, and as such proceeding is contrary to order unless the noble lord is speaking, evidence is thus supplied of the fact that he is making a speech. The late Lord Lyttelton suffered in a double capacity when he attempted to instruct the people. He was so inadequately heard in the Reporters' gallery, that attempts at reproducing his speech led to ludicrous and damaging errors, and when with his own hand he wrote to the papers, correcting the blunders, his corrections could not be deciphered. Lord Stratheden and Campbell—the Ashmead Bartlett of the House of Lords—is more fortunate in respect of the adaptation of his voice to the peculiar acoustical properties of the gilded chamber, where the tide of democracy is stayed, and the Compensation for Disturbances Bill is thrown out on the second reading. In those remarkable lectures on foreign affairs, which his lordship from time to time delivers, he is fairly well heard, but persistently unreported. The other night Earl Granville smote with a double-edged sword when he blandly observed that he did not often take the advice of Lord Denman, but when it was

given in the direction of proposing that he should not answer observations from Lord Stratheden and Campbell, he was inclined to vary his rule.

This is a remark which goes dangerously near justification of the measure of space which the newspapers are accustomed to give to reports of proceedings in the House of Lords. There are occasions when debate in this chamber rises high above the average excellence of the House of Commons. This must needs follow from the fact that the Upper Chamber slowly, but steadily drains the Lower House of its highest talent. It is not probable that Mr. Gladstone will ever barter the supremacy of his simple style for an earldom and the garter. That Mr. Lowe should have consented to disguise himself in the robes which Viscount Sherbrooke is privileged to wear, was rather an admission of defeat than a sign of victory. No one who meets the noble lord hovering about the gates of the House of Commons, forlornly sitting in the Peers' gallery, and looking with saddened eyes upon the arena in which he may never more tighten his girths, can doubt that he would rather be plain Mr. Lowe on the Treasury bench than Viscount Sherbrooke on a back seat in the House of Lords. To him the coronet came as a well-earned reward, and as an unmistakable mark of a closed career. It was different with Lord Cranbrook, who was promoted to the House of Lords not because his term of usefulness had closed in the House of Commons, but because there was good reason to believe it might be extended amongst the Peers.

Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen was sent to the House of Lords for a different and less flattering reason. He was made a Peer for the same reason that an odd piece of cloth left over from making a coat serves to construct a pen-wiper. There was not enough of him to make anything more useful. As far as his own views were concerned there was no office in the newly-formed administration that he was not both capable and willing to fulfil. He would have taken charge of the colonies, the army, the navy, or the Ministry itself, with an equally light heart. His view of his particular adaptability did not precisely coincide with Mr. Gladstone's, and so, after the sardonic humour of Prime Ministers, he was made Lord Brabourne, and acknowledges the honour by taking an early opportunity of attempting to thwart the policy of his former colleagues.

Lord Beaconsfield was not proof against this temptation to shelve failure or mediocrity. He had not been two years an Earl himself before he made Sir Charles Adderley, Lord Norton. As President of the Board of Trade Sir Charles—an honest, high-minded, well-meaning man—had ludicrously failed, bringing on his colleagues a measure of discredit from which they never fully recovered. It would not do to cashier him. A powerful Minister might promote Mr. Cavendish Bentinck from a subordinate post at the Board of Trade to be Judge-Advocate-General. But the grim joke would not work the other way, and the President of the Board of Trade might not be made Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, or even Judge-Advocate-General. So Vivian Grey made Sir Charles Adderley Baron Norton. But this class of recruits to the House of Lords is, after all, a mere accident, and is more than counterbalanced by the rich blood from time to time infused from the commonalty. Lord Beaconsfield himself, Lord Cairns, Lord Selborne, and many others, afford conspicuous examples of the way in which the House of Lords sometimes touches Mother Earth, and rises refreshed.

*Voices in the Lords.* It happens curiously enough that in the House of Lords the fact of a man's having anything to say is usually coincident with his having voice wherewith to utter it. Lord Derby, it is true, is difficult to hear, and sometimes suffers in the reports of his speeches. But, by comparison with the multitude of peers, he is audible. The first time the Earl of Beaconsfield rose in the House of Lords he proved that he had achieved a fresh triumph, and had overcome the evil powers that fatally crush the eloquence of the majority of his peers. He is heard just as well in the House of Lords as he was in the House of Commons, which seems to show that the complaints made of the acoustical properties of the Upper Chamber are exaggerated. Lord Cranbrook, too, with his impetuous speech, in which words tumble over each other like boulders down a glacier stream, has no difficulty in making himself heard. The Marquis of Salisbury fills every cranny of the House with his strong ringing voice, and Earl Granville, the *timbre* of whose voice is exquisitely matched with his intellectual and political characteristics, manages to make himself very fairly heard.

Lord Cairns comes within the same category and so, on a somewhat lower scale, does Lord Selborne.

This is a curious fact, worthy of consideration, and certainly beyond dispute, that in the House of Lords—unquestionably a chamber of faulty acoustical arrangements—the men who are worth hearing are gifted by nature with ability to make themselves heard. It would not be safe to strain the argument too far, and to assert that the converse is true in precise proportionate degree. But it is the fact that the man heard with the least effort in the House of Lords is the one who stands head and shoulders above his peers. Next to Lord Beaconsfield in excellence of this particular quality come Lord Cairns and the Marquis of Salisbury, who stand on so near a level that they would be best bracketed. It might be possible to name two peers who are equal to the Marquis and the ex-Lord Chancellor, but it is certainly impossible to name any three who equal these, the best heard men in the House of Lords.

Aug. 31.—Lord Redesdale, if he thought it necessary to label himself in any way for the information of the herd, would certainly call himself “a Tory.” He is now advanced in years, but time has brought him no knowledge. Many years ago a Tory Government, not quite knowing what to do with him, and finding him a somewhat troublesome appanage, made him Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords. In this capacity he has been the terror of enterprising railway contractors, and indeed of any one who, having occasion to appear before the House, has displayed a tendency to go in advance anywhere. Lord Redesdale is for standing still, and he snaps with sullen wrath at any who would move. He carries out even to the point of personal apparel his antique notions. His rusty black clothes are of a peculiarly formal cut, and give him, with his short square figure, an odd resemblance to an autocratic butler in a fine old-flavoured county family—an impression strengthened by the fact that etiquette requiring the Chairman of Committees to wear a white necktie Lord Redesdale may often be seen in broad daylight displaying this peculiarity common at a dinner party to the guests who sit down to the feast and their fellow creatures who only stand and wait.

There is a story on this point, which if not true is well

invented. It is said that a new member being invited to dinner at the house of one of the ex-Ministers, arrived a little late and a great deal flurried. On entering the hall he saw, apparently arranging the hats and coats on the hall-stand, a highly respectable servant out of livery, to whom he handed his hat and cane and walked up-stairs. Presently he saw the man enter the room, and thought he had come to announce dinner. He was much surprised when he heard him announced as the Earl of Redesdale, and rather wished he had been dining elsewhere.

Sept. 1. — "The In some respects Mr. Finigan is the most remarkable bar'net." able speaker the House of Commons possesses. He is so strictly a patriot that he will use the English language only upon condition that he may dismember its polysyllables. He talks with provoking deliberation of *ree-peated*, *un-worthy*, *be-longed*, *ree-dressed*, *ree-tarded*. One other peculiarity, shared with Mr. Arthur O'Connor, is the promotion he bestows upon the baronets of the House. He always speaks of "the noble bar'net" when criticising the ingenuous remarks of Sir Patrick O'Brien or the homely humour of Sir Andrew Lusk.

Sept. 3. — Mr. Callan makes a night of it. What is to be done with the hon. member for Louth? This was the question which, with red face, rumpled hair, and general disorder of apparel, presented itself with provoking pertinacity to bewildered Ministers almost amidst the last gasps of the Session. On the whole the evening had been a most profitable one. Both Houses compressed into one crowded hour of glorious life as much real business as, at earlier periods of the Session, they had been accustomed to extend over days, or even weeks. A few days earlier Mr. Osborne Morgan had been in a mental and bodily condition that made it doubtful whether he would live long enough to obtain the benefits of his own Burials Act. He had fasted many days, feverishly pacing between the House of Lords and the House of Commons, bearing on bent shoulders the burden of the Burials Bill. The Lords were bad enough; but they were nothing to the Commons. Churchmen were hard to deal with; but they were in his hands plastic as modellers' wax, compared with the irreconcilable Nonconformists. He had lived years since the second reading of the Bill had been moved in the House of

Commons, and had by leaps and bounds reached the age of four-score, when a man's strength is but sorrow and weariness. But to-night all had come well. The Lords, terrified at T. P. O'Connor, and fluttered by Mr. Forster, had made haste to yield all that was asked. Lord Redesdale, the naughty boy of the school, had been thoroughly frightened, and now sat on a corner of the woolsack in affected carelessness, swinging a pair of legs too short to reach the ground, and trying to look as if he would do it all over again if they didn't mind. Noble lords cast furtive glances towards this truculent personage, not quite sure that he really might not break out again, and anxious only to get through their business as quickly as possible, so that he might not have a chance of further embroiling them.

Not only was the Burials Bill safe from further dispute, but the Lords had swallowed the whole of the Commons' amendments to the Employers' Liability Bill. Lord Brabourne, scouted by the party who had made him a peer, and sneered at by the party into whose hands he had played, nervously and ineffectually attempted to justify his course. In the Commons things were looking equally pleasant. The Hares and Rabbits Bill had been piloted through its last shoals, and past the ultimate rocks that beset it. Mr. Parnell's attack on the Appropriation Bill had proved a very tame affair. The Fourth Party were comfortably dining, fighting o'er again the battles of the Session. Nothing had come of the proposal to dock Lord Redesdale's salary except two lively speeches, in which Mr. Bright and Sir William Harcourt had vied with each other in heaping contumely on the House of Lords in general, and the Chairman of Committees in particular. The Appropriation Bill was through Committee; the Prorogation was almost within reach of welcoming grasp; peace, contentment, and somnolency reigned in all parts of the House.

It was at this moment, and in such circumstances that the question described above propounded itself. Mr. Callan had not been following the course of the debate throughout the sitting. He had come in, summoned by the bells that sounded the alarm for the division on the question of the reduction of Lord Redesdale's salary. Making his way to the corner seat below the gangway, from which the leader for the time being of the Fourth

Party is accustomed to address the House, he carefully arranged a large bundle of papers, adding a pleasing diversity to the combination by disposing of some of them upside down. Dr. Playfair, who had an uneasy presentiment that something disagreeable was coming, rattled through the clauses of the Bill, and had got well into the schedules when Mr. Callan, observing that there was something going on, rose and began to talk.

He was almost inarticulate in his woe. Not only was his heart broken, but his words were in the same condition, and presented themselves to the House in a curiously clipped fashion, showing a forlorn desire to rush into each others' arms and seek the sympathy refused to them by a Saxon House of Commons. This was touching, but had a slight tendency towards incoherency. The House listened and wondered, and asked itself what all this might mean. This was a question it was quite at liberty to put to itself. But when addressed to the hon. member for Louth the consequences were disastrous. Dr. Playfair, heroically rushing to the front, in the mildest possible manner, and in unexceptionable language, invited Mr. Callan to state what was the nature of the motion with which he proposed to conclude his remarks. This, the Chairman of Committees apologetically observed, would be a great convenience, as at present the Committee had no idea in what direction the hon. member's remarks tended.

A few minutes earlier a member, who had cried "Oh!" in commentary on some observation he had been exceptionally fortunate in comprehending, had been almost literally shrivelled up by the lightning of Mr. Callan's glance. Stopping short in his speech he had turned full round and fixedly regarded the unfortunate member, who vainly tried to look as if it was not him. Now, when the Chairman of Committees, in however studiously conciliatory manner, had suggested the desirability of the Committee knowing what Mr. Callan was talking about, he, taking half a pace across the floor of the House, declared in elliptical speech—

"Dr. Playfair, sir, I will not be dictated to by a Scotchman!"

This was very awkward. In Mr. Callan's frame of mind it was impossible to obtain full explanation on minor points. It might be that he would have no objection to dictation by an

Englishman, a Welshman, or a native of the Channel Islands. But he had not vouchsafed more than a direct negative in respect to a Scotchman, and, as Dr. Playfair's nationality was unquestioned, there was a sudden end of what appeared to present a favourable opening for negotiation. Mr. Callan's feelings being deeply stirred, impartially emitted flashes of forked lightning for all representatives of difference from the established order of things. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, rising on a point of order, was instantly put down by an announcement that attack from a temperance member would not prevent him (Mr. Callan) doing his duty.

"I have always found," he added, meditatively, and with the elliptical pronunciation before noted, "that people who are temperate in the matter of drink are very intemperate in the matter of language."

Mr. Bradlaugh, scandalised at the repetition of the word "infidel," moved that it be taken down. But Mr. Callan graciously explained that when he used the obnoxious word he had merely alluded to the "contemptible, ignorant shopkeepers of London." This of course was satisfactory, and Mr. Bradlaugh resumed his seat. Some cries of "Order!" being raised on the opposite benches, Mr. Callan, having tried polysyllables with a moderate amount of success, made it known that he was not to be put down by a "Radical, ignorant, intolerant, nonconformist, atheistical, tyrant majority." Having again denounced an anonymous "ignorant infidel" in connection with an unnamed "Scotch Presbyterian," whose interference generally he defied, the Chairman ruled that the words were out of order, and there were loud cries of "Withdraw!" Mr. Callan was open to compromise. He would not withdraw anything, but he undertook not to repeat the word. "Let go by," he said, with a deprecatory wave of his hand. "Let shlide."

Matters were getting a little critical, for Mr. Callan showed no signs of stopping, and no one could foretell what might come next. Lord Hartington and the Home Secretary were on the Treasury bench. Dr. Playfair, sat in the Chair, nervously rubbing his hands, and considering how near he might go towards dictation without bringing open reproach on his nationality. Crouching behind his chair, like the Lion Mount protecting

the City of Edinbro' was Sir Erskine May. A little red book began to pass from hand to hand on the Treasury bench, its contents carefully studied. The time to strike was evidently close at hand. But Mr. Callan continued, unconscious of his approaching doom, and generally denunciatory of Atheists, Non-conformists, and Scotchmen. The Chairman threatened to "name" him if he persisted. This was an historic threat, which Mr. Callan laughed to scorn. He went on to commend increased expenditure of public money on behalf of Roman Catholic chaplains. This brought up the Chairman with another protest on a point of order. But Mr. Callan saw through the device. It was the national thrift of Scotchmen, who objected to spending an extra penny, and he declared he was "not shuprised."

Then the thunderbolt fell. Mr. Callan was "named," and resumed his seat, being really interested in having this great problem settled, and seeing what would follow. What followed was that the House passed a resolution suspending him from further service during the sitting. The resolution being enforced by the authority of the Chair, the Speaker asked Mr. Callan to withdraw. Would he go? Yes, on reflection he would. So, fixing his eyes steadily on the distant door, he retired, carrying out his papers and his unexplained and unredressed wrong to Ireland, skilfully turning about as he crossed the Bar, and kissing his hand to the outraged Speaker.

Sept. 6. — Mr. Gladstone <sup>con-</sup>  
<sub>valescent.</sub> The House of Commons met at two o'clock. A few minutes after the Speaker had taken the

chair Mr. Gladstone rapidly entered, and took his seat on the Treasury bench. At sight of the Premier returning to the House after long and momentous absence, members immediately behind the Treasury bench raised a cheer, which, when its occasion was understood, was taken up from all parts of the House, and prolonged during several moments. The Premier looked in much better health than on the Friday, now some weeks gone by, when he last appeared in the House, and was evidently much gratified at the spontaneous welcome which for the moment obliterated lines of party.

Sept. 7. — Pro-  
rogation. To-day Parliament was prorogued by Royal Com-  
mission.

Sept. 10.—Retro-  
spect. It is possible that the New Parliament may  
cherish within its bosom some men destined to  
replace Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, Lord Beaconsfield, and Lord  
Sherbrooke, when these shall have followed the giants of earlier  
days. But, looking back on the Session closed on Tuesday, it  
must be said that, up to the present, the secret has been well  
kept. There have not been wanting occasions calculated to stir  
eloquence and make discovery of genius. But the coming man  
has held his peace, and made no sign. The retrospect becomes  
the more gloomy when the fact is recalled that, as a rule, new  
members have not been particularly bashful or immovably reti-  
cent. In fact, old stagers have observed that there never was  
a Parliament in the earliest debates of which new members  
have taken so large if not so prominent a share. We know  
most of them by sight, and have had opportunity of forming  
an estimate of what they may do. But no name comes to the  
lips when the mind reviews the Session, and searches for new  
light.

In the Parliament of 1874 the honours of the first Session  
were carried away by the Irish contingent. This was largely  
composed of new men, who developed a keenness of debating  
power, a brilliancy of wit, and a richness of eloquence, which  
last, if it had a fault, was, perhaps, a trifle too abundant. The  
Irish ranks have again been largely recruited by the latest  
General Election, but there is not one among the new comers  
who promises to make obstruction in any measure acceptable by  
reason of personal ability or gift of speech. Mr. A. M. Sullivan  
and Mr. O'Connor Power remain unapproachable amongst their  
countrymen on the score of eloquence and debating capacity.  
The personal predominance of Mr. Parnell is unchallenged; Mr.  
Biggar stands unique, and there is no one to dispute with Mr.  
O'Donnell his pre-eminent capacity for differing from every one,  
more particularly his own colleagues. There are dark possibilities  
in the depths of Mr. Dillon's nature, which make it safer to  
leave his horoscope uncast. In respect of capabilities of sustain-  
ing a particular character in Irish National history, his is a  
bigger, broader, and deeper nature than Mr. Parnell's. Cir-  
cumstances may, and probably will, make much more of him.  
In the meantime he remains the dark horse of the Irish  
National Party.

**The Fourth Party.** On the Conservative side the most remarkable phenomenon of the Session is, of course, the rise of that power in the State which the world has learned to know by the title “the Fourth Party.” A feature in the growth of this new element in politics is the reversal of former conditions of comparative notoriety. In the last Parliament both Mr. Gorst and Sir Henry Wolff might claim to be better known than Lord Randolph Churchill. The appearances of this young nobleman on the floor of the Senate were brief and eccentric. Since the day when he had risen in righteous wrath, and bestowed on Mr. Slater-Booth a terrible castigation, from which the right hon. gentleman has never really recovered, his voice had not been heard.

The House, remembering this outbreak, and recalling the conduct of his share of the annual duel with Sir Charles Dilke on the question of unreformed corporations, was willing to concede that there was something in the youth, but was wholly unprepared for the development of persistent and sustained capacity for conducting a campaign it has since witnessed. It did Lord Randolph the injustice to believe that he was inclined to give up to small and select evening parties what was meant for mankind. The experience of the present Session has demonstrated the danger of arriving at these hasty conclusions.

Few spectacles have been more sublime than that of this young man of fashion devoting himself assiduously to the affairs of the State, sitting up long hours in the House of Commons, and doing violence to a naturally retiring disposition by bearding the Premier on the Treasury bench, and challenging to single combat proved warriors like Mr. Bright, not to mention Sir William Harcourt. As an example to other political divisions, the discipline maintained throughout the Fourth Party, and the ease with which its machinery has worked, have been simply invaluable. There have been here no incipient formation of “Caves,” no inconvenient questions publicly put to the Leader by members of the Party, no collision of strategy, and no rumours of secession. The Party has worked together as one man, silently rebuking by its cohesion restless upheavals from which the great majority opposite have not been altogether free.

Mr. Warton. Whilst amongst the Conservatives the Fourth Party engrosses attention below the gangway, the principal product of the new Parliament on the benches above is Mr. Warton. It is a beneficent disposition of Providence that a General Election which deprived the House of the Admiral should have given it Mr. Warton. There is a striking similarity between the two, even to the matter of position. The Admiral sat in the centre of one of the benches behind his leaders, and Mr. Warton occupies the same position, only he happened to select the third bench, whereas the Admiral chose the first. In respect of articulate speech it must be admitted that Mr. Warton's capacity is further developed than was the Admiral's. That gallant officer was a man of few words. When he had said "Hear, hear!" or "Oh, oh!" or "No, no!" or on supreme occasions had ejaculated "Bah!" he had paid out the full length of the hawser of his speech. Once only, as far as memory goes, did he embark upon a more multitudinous sea of words. This happened during one of the debates on flogging, when the Admiral, with much unction, described to a deeply interested House how, when in command of one of H.M.'s ships, rumours of revolt in the forecastle being reported to him, he mustered the men, and making a hasty selection, had them flogged, with the happiest results. The success of this speech was greatly augmented by the significant manner in which the Admiral kept his eye on Mr. Biggar whilst unctuously describing the process of flogging. But he did not peril his first success by repetition, and was thereafter content to limit his contributions to Parliamentary debates to monosyllables interjected in a voice of thunder.

Like the Admiral, Mr. Warton's great *forte* is interjection. Like him, too, he is always in his place, whether early or late, whether the debate be lively or dull. His cheer is always ready for an ex-Minister or a good Conservative, and his "Oh, oh!" or his "No, no!" is freely at the disposal of either Liberal or Irish member. But he is not content with thus playing the accompaniment. He sometimes comes forward and volunteers a solo, which he insists upon rendering whether the House will or not.

On the whole, he is tolerated with the good humour with

which the House of Commons is always ready to treat eccentricity. Mr. Warton has not yet sat six months in the House of Commons, and he is already one of its institutions, as much so as Mr. Newdegate or Mr. Biggar is, or as the Major or the Admiral was.

Mr. Bright. Mr. Bright has been amongst the most constant attendants on Parliamentary duties. His presence on the Treasury bench is the more noticeable since he frequently sits through the long hour when other men and Ministers are dining. His capacity for listening is something wonderful. This is the time when the most unattractive speakers find their opportunity, and frequently address an audience of which, numerically, Mr. Bright comprises a tithe. Sometimes his patience is rewarded by unexpectedly coming across some original idea or some flash of common sense, of which he never fails to make recognition if he should subsequently address the House. He has, more particularly since Mr. Gladstone's absence, been one of the principal contributors from the Treasury bench to the week's debate. There is, so far as I can remember, not one of the great questions that have come before the new Parliament on which his voice has not been heard. He has been in better health than for some years back, and, though he is careful not to try his voice too much, it appears to have shared in the general resuscitation of his physical powers. He was here on Tuesday, and stood at the bar of the House of Lords whilst the Speech was being read, listening with hand to ear as intently as if its purport were now for the first time revealed to him.

Mr. Gladstone. As for Mr. Gladstone, there is no question that he is thoroughly himself again. When he came down to the House on Saturday, he was quite a new man as compared to his former self at the time he was still battling against the uncertainty of the Session, and probably when the fever had already taken possession of him. To see him now no one would guess that he was three weeks ago lying perilously near death's door. It is a long time since I saw him look as well. He has entirely lost that troubled, anxious gaze with which he was wont to confront passing events of the Session.

Lord Hartington. There has been one success of the Session, the record of which is already a familiar story. Lord Hartington, suddenly called upon to take the lead of the House in the temporary absence of Mr. Gladstone, has displayed qualities the existence of which, it is more than hinted, were not believed in. The fact is that during the last month Lord Hartington has, for the first time, had his opportunity. As leader of the Opposition in the last Parliament, he did better than any of his contemporaries were capable of doing. He was the only man who had at once both the will and the capacity to fill the toilsome and thankless post of leading a party that would not follow in an attack on a stronghold admittedly impregnable. At the beginning of the Session he was overshadowed and embarrassed by the presence of Mr. Gladstone. He fell back apparently without a struggle, and even with some sense of relief, into his older manner of reserve. It would be curious and instructive to contrast his answers to questions put now and to those of precisely the same importance addressed to him two months ago. When simply Secretary of State for India his replies were long, laboured, and overwhelmed with detail. His answers now, whilst not less informing, are sharp, terse, and to the point.

Lord Hartington is not gifted with that bumptiousness which frequently accompanies and makes more offensive shallow natures. He habitually mistrusts himself, and is only too glad to make way for others. It chanced that his first efforts as *ad interim* Leader, happy in themselves, were received with applause from onlookers. Thus encouraged he has walked with more confidence, and has been induced to give freer play to his faculties. During the past month he has, more than at any time during his public career, lifted the mask of reserve that habitually clothes his public appearance. The result has been so happy that it is to be hoped the process will be carried further. Of all living English statesmen Lord Hartington has displayed the greatest measure of improbability. For the last six years he has been constantly improving. The English people, and more especially the House of Commons, which knows him best, have begun to believe that there are no near limits to his ultimate development.

## CALENDAR OF THE SESSION.

### APRIL.

29. *Thurs.*—Choice of Speaker. | 30. *Fri.*—Members take the Oath.

### MAY.

<p>1. <i>Sat.</i>—Members take the Oath.</p> <p>2. <i>Mon.</i>—Members take the Oath. Mr. Bradlaugh claims to make an Affirmation. Select Committee appointed. New Writs issued.</p> <p>4. <i>Tues.</i>—Members take the Oath. New Writs issued.</p> <p>10. <i>Mon.</i>—Ditto, ditto, ditto.</p> <p>11. <i>Tues.</i>—Ditto, ditto, ditto. Parliamentary Oath Committee nominated.</p> <p>20. <i>Thurs.</i>—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. Amendment, <i>Mr. O'C. Power</i>. Division—For, 47. Against, 300.</p> <p>21. <i>Fri.</i>—Mr. Bradlaugh proposes to take the Oath. Motion, <i>Sir H. Wolff</i>. Amendment, <i>Mr. Gladstone</i>. Debate adjourned.</p>	<p>21. <i>Fri.</i>—H. M. Speech. Report of Address.</p> <p>24. <i>Mon.</i>—Oath. (Mr. Bradlaugh.) Debate on Motion, &amp;c. Division—For Amendment, 289. Against, 214.</p> <p>25. <i>Tues.</i>—Adjournment over Derby Day. Ayes, 285. Noes, 115.</p> <p>Oath. (Mr. Bradlaugh.) Committee appointed. South Africa. Motion, <i>Mr. R. Fowler</i>. Negatived.</p> <p>27. <i>Thurs.</i>—Supply: Civil Services. 16 Votes passed.</p> <p>28. <i>Fri.</i>—Oath. (Mr. Bradlaugh.) Committee nominated. Supply: Civil Services. 16 Votes passed.</p> <p>31. <i>Mon.</i>—Supply: Civil Services. 11 Votes passed.</p>
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### JUNE.

<p>1. <i>Tues.</i>—Cyprus. Orders. Motion, <i>Mr. Rylands</i>. Withdrawn.</p> <p>2. <i>Wed.</i>—Hours of Polling Bill. <i>Mr. A. Dilke</i>. Committed.</p> <p>3. <i>Thurs.</i>—Employers' Liability Bill. <i>Mr. Dodson</i>. Committed. London Water Supply. Select Committee appointed.</p> <p>4. <i>Fri.</i>—Ordnance Survey. <i>Sir H. Jackson</i>. Motion Opium Trade. <i>Mr. J. Pease</i>. Observations. Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Bill. <i>Mr. O'C. Power</i>. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.</p> <p>7. <i>Mon.</i>—Supply: Navy Estimates. 3 Votes passed.</p> <p>5. <i>Tues.</i>—Army Retirement. Motion, <i>Earl Percy</i>. Withdrawn. County Lunatic Asylums. Motion, <i>Mr. S. Leighton</i>. Withdrawn.</p> <p>9. <i>Wed.</i>—Married Women's Property Bill. <i>Mr. H. Palmer</i>. Committed.</p> <p>10. <i>Thurs.</i>—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, <i>Mr. Gladstone</i>. Hares, &amp;c., Bill. <i>Mr. W. Harcourt</i>. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.</p> <p>11. <i>Fri.</i>—Ways and Means. Report. Vaccination. Motion, <i>Dr. Cameron</i>. Withdrawn.</p> <p>14. <i>Mon.</i>—The French Ambassador. <i>Mr. O'Donnell's</i> Question. Motion (<i>Mr. Gladstone</i>), That Mr. O'Donnell be not heard. Withdrawn.</p> <p>15. <i>Tues.</i>—European Armaments. Motion, <i>Mr. Richard</i>. Amended and agreed to.</p> <p>16. <i>Wed.</i>—Town Councils (Aldermen) Bill. <i>Mr. James</i>. Committed. Agricultural Holdings. Motion, <i>Sir A. Gordon</i>. Withdrawn.</p> <p>17. <i>Thurs.</i>—Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill. Adjourned Debate on 2nd Reading. Bill committed.</p>	<p>18. <i>Fri.</i>—Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill. Committed. 1st Sitting. Savings Banks Bill. <i>Mr. Fawcett</i>. Motion for 2nd Reading. Intoxicating Liquors (Licences). Motion, <i>Sir W. Lawson</i>. Division—For, 229. Against, 203.</p> <p>21. <i>Mon.</i>—Mr. Bradlaugh. Motion. That he be permitted to affirm. <i>Mr. Labouchere</i>. Amendment, <i>Sir H. Giffard</i>. Debate adjourned.</p> <p>22. <i>Tues.</i>—Mr. Bradlaugh. Adjourned Debate. Division—For Sir H. Giffard's Amendment, 275. Against, 230.</p> <p>23. <i>Wed.</i>—Mr. Bradlaugh's Claim to take the Oath. Motion for his committal to custody. (<i>Sir S. Northcote</i>.) Division—Ayes, 274. Noes, 6. Local Enquiries (Ireland) Bill. <i>Mr. Fay</i>. Withdrawn.</p> <p>24. <i>Thurs.</i>—Mr. Bradlaugh. His discharge from custody. Customs Bill. <i>Mr. Gladstone</i>. Committed.</p> <p>25. <i>Fri.</i>—Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill. <i>Mr. W. E. Forster</i>. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned. Public Houses (Sunday). Motion, <i>Mr. Stevenson</i>. For, 153. Against, 117. Supply: Civil Services. Vote on account.</p> <p>28. <i>Mon.</i>—Supply: Navy Estimates. 11 Votes passed.</p> <p>29. <i>Tues.</i>—Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill. Adjourned Debate on 2nd Reading. 2nd Day.</p> <p>30. <i>Wed.</i>—Intoxicating Liquors Sunday (Wales) Bill. <i>Mr. Roberts</i>. Committed. Fixity of Tenure (Ireland) Bill. <i>Mr. Litton</i>. Division on Previous Question—Ayes, 45. Noes, 187.</p>
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## JULY.

1. Thurs.—Parliamentary Affirmation. Motion, *Mr. Gladstone*. Division—For, 303. Against, 249.
2. Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill. Adjourned Debate on 2nd Reading. 3rd Day.
2. Fri.—Employers' Liability Bill. Debate on going into Committee. Central Africa (Missionaries). Motion, *Dr. Cameron*. Withdrawn.
3. Sat.—Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.
5. Mon.—Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill. Adjourned Debate on 2nd Reading. 3rd Day. Division—Ayes, 295. Noes, 217. Bill committed.
6. Tues.—Employers' Liability Bill. Debate on going into Committee. 2nd Day. Army. Motion, *Mr. Trevelyan*. Withdrawn.
7. Wed.—Sea Fisheries (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Collins*. Motion for 2nd Reading. Division—Ayes, 125. Noes, 172.
8. Thurs.—Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill. Adjourned Debate on 2nd Reading. 4th Day. Division—Ayes, 255. Noes, 199.
9. Fri.—Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting. University Tests. Motion, *Mr. Roundell*. Withdrawn.
- Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 2nd Sitting.
12. Mon.—Supply: Civil Service Estimates. 14 Votes passed.
- Relief of Distress (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 2nd Sitting. Bill reported.
13. Tues.—Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 3rd Sitting.

## AUGUST.

2. Mon.—Supply: Civil Services. Education. 5 Votes passed.
3. Tues.—Employers' Liability Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.
- Ditto, ditto, ditto. 2nd Sitting.
4. Wed.—Ditto, ditto, ditto. Committee. 3rd Sitting.
5. Thurs.—Ditto, ditto, ditto. 4th Sitting.
6. Fri.—Ditto, ditto, ditto. 5th Sitting. Slaughter (Imported Cattle). Motion, *Mr. A. Arnold*. Division—For, 20. Against, 194.
- Employers' Liability Bill. Committee. 6th Sitting. Bill reported.
9. Mon.—Supply: Civil Services. 12 Votes passed.
10. Tues.—Hares, &c., Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.
11. Wed.—Ditto, ditto. 2nd Sitting.
12. Thurs.—Burials Bill. Division on 2nd Reading—Ayes, 258. Noes, 79.
13. Fri.—Employers' Liability Bill. Considered.
- Ditto, ditto. Read 3<sup>rd</sup>.
16. Mon.—Supply: Civil Services. 13 Votes passed.
17. Tues.—India. Financial Statement.
18. Wed.—Employers' Liability Bill. Read 3<sup>rd</sup>. Savings Banks Bill. Committee.

## SEPTEMBER.

1. Wed.—The Appropriation Bill. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.
2. Thurs.—Census Bill. Committee. Employers' Liability Bill. Lords' Amendments considered.
- The Appropriation Bill. Read 2<sup>nd</sup>.
3. Fri.—The Appropriation Bill. Committee. Instruction, *Mr. Parnell*. Division—Ayes, 23. Noes, 58. Bill reported.
4. Sat.—The Appropriation Bill. Read 3<sup>rd</sup>.
7. Tues.—Prorogation.

## SESSION 1881.

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### CHAPTER IX.

#### OBSTRUCTION.

Opening Day—The last Radical—Mr. Courtney's Defection—Mr. O'Connor Power—Mr. Parnell's dual Character—The Member for Woodcock—Lord R. Churchill and Mr. Davitt—Irish Bulls—Lord Hartington—Mr. Warton drops into Poetry—Advocates of Order—Masters of the House—The Axe in the Lobby—A Conspiracy of Silence—A Twenty-two Hours' Sitting—Mr. Cowen—A new Member—A Change.

Jan. 6.—Opening Day. Mr. Forster opened the business of the Session Day. by giving notice of his intention to introduce a Bill for the better protection of life and property in Ireland, an announcement received with cries of "Oh, oh!" from the Parnellites, and general cheering from other parts of the House. The cheering was renewed when the Chief Secretary gave further notice of a Bill to amend the law relating to the carrying and possession of arms and the preservation of public peace in Ireland. Mr. Parnell, jumping up amid cries of "Order!" gave notice to oppose both these measures. Notices by Sir Henry James and Sir Charles Dilke of intention to deal with the laws relating to Parliamentary elections brought to a conclusion an unusually brief list of Ministerial measures. After this came a deluge of notices of motion from private members. Upwards of ninety had been entered on the ballot list, and the names were called out in order by the Speaker. But when these were concluded there followed another long series, which extended this portion of the proceedings over the space of an hour.

Jan. 8.—The last Radical. There has been thus far in the Session nothing so fine as Sir Wilfrid Lawson's attack on Mr. Courtney. In the politics of below the gangway the figure of Sir Wilfrid Lawson is beginning to assume a certain gloomy grandeur. A strong human interest attaches to the Last Man in whatever circumstances his loneliness may arise, and Sir

Wilfrid has reason to regard himself as the ultimate relic of the little company who kept alight below the gangway the pure flame of true Liberalism. The Elijah of modern polities, he cries aloud to the gods of pragmatic Radicalism, "The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenants, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I, only am left." It is a goodly company that have crossed the Rubicon marked by the gangway—or, perhaps, in this connection, Sir Wilfrid will be inclined to call the passage the Styx. He can remember, as 'twere but yesterday, when the present Home Secretary (Sir W. Harcourt) and the Attorney-General (Sir H. James) sat together and conspired to show how much better they knew everything than did the members of the Government they were returned by their constituencies to support. Later still is the memory of the days when Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Mundella might be counted upon for cosy little meetings in the Tea Room or Corridor, at which benign schemes for confounding the Liberal chiefs and playing into the hands of the enemy were conceived and elaborated. But now all, all are gone—the old familiar faces.

Mr. Courtney's One was left, one faithful among the faithless defection. found. Office had been dangled before his eyes. A salary payable quarterly had been within reach of his hand. And yet he had stood firm, and had smiled with pardonable scorn when he looked down on his old companions-in-arms now wearing the uniform of the Queen, and sitting in disciplined dumbness on the Treasury bench. Sir Wilfrid would have staked his life on the fidelity of Mr. Courtney. To have refused a lordship of the Treasury was a mark of virtue which stamped the nature of the man. But there was something even better than this that seemed calculated to hold Mr. Courtney safe. Night after night through the coming Session he would have the satisfaction of sitting in his place and pluming himself on his superior virtue, no small luxury to men of a certain temperament. It has always been a moot point whether little Jack Horner sitting in his corner (which was surely situated below the gangway) derived the greater measure of satisfaction from the material enjoyment of his refection, or from the moral

exaltation expressed in his ingenuous exclamation, "See what a good boy am I!" Mr. Courtney had sacrificed the plum, but the pleased reflection remained to him. Now he has bartered self-complacency for an Under-Secretaryship of State, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson takes the earliest possible opportunity, on the very first night of an exceptionally early Session, to taunt him with his weakness.

It must be an unwelcome thought to Mr. Gladstone that Sir Wilfrid, at least, is unpurchaseable. About the others who have stood for truth below the gangway, and have, when opportunity arose, taken office above it, there has never been any doubt of the end. The question was simply one of time. It would come sooner or it might happen later. But there is only one bait that would draw Sir Wilfrid Lawson from the mount whence so many sermons have been delivered. If he were offered the post of Home Secretary, with authority to make Local Option imperative, he would fain give up the opportunity of twitting the Government about South Africa. Since this is impossible, he will remain at his post to the last, and make himself exceedingly disagreeable to constituted authority.

Those who are accustomed to regard Sir Wilfrid as the Yorick of the House of Commons will have some difficulty in appreciating what is even a more strongly marked feature in his character. He is, in a quiet way, perhaps the most stubborn man in the House. Differing from Buckingham, as sketched by Dryden, he has his jest, but at the same time takes care that other people do not have his estate. He will laugh with the House, and make it laugh with him. But all the while he is standing as firmly and as unyieldingly by his purpose as if he regarded the Commons with folded arms, scowling brow, and clenched teeth. Governments are nothing to him, and he laughs at the perils of party. He "stands for the truth," and the truth is just what he thinks, nothing more nor anything less.

In the meantime, he will feel he has done his duty in smiting the latest traitor to the patriot camp. Nothing could be neater than the way in which the blow was delivered. Sir Wilfrid did not stand up and denounce his old companion, as, indeed, it would have been neither polite nor reasonable to do. All he did was to suggest, with suavest manner, that since the Premier did not find it convenient to make any statement of the views of the

Government with respect to the Transvaal, perhaps the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department might undertake the duty.\* This was worth a whirlwind of wrath, or a volume of mournful melody such as that with which Robert Browning serenaded another Lost Leader.

Mr. O'Connor Power. There have been no great speeches in these first two days of the Session, though several have reached a high standard of excellence. To-night Mr. O'Connor Power gave fresh illustration of the fact already established, that below the very first rank, in which so few stand, he is one of the most graceful and powerful debaters the House possesses. Either by skill or, more probably, by force of character, he has impressed the House of Commons with a sense of his moderation and fairness. The most hopeless thing that can happen to a speaker in the House of Commons is that when he rises his audience should know beforehand pretty much what he will say. With Mr. O'Connor Power reason and argument have something to do with the conclusion at which he should land. Never false to the principles he has espoused, he succeeds in investing their advocacy with a not altogether usual aspect of sincerity. Much of what he said to-night was rather oratorical than accurate; but a great deal is fair in Parliamentary warfare.

Mr. Parnell's dual character. Mr. Parnell's speech was exceedingly adroit, and only wanted one thing to complete the satisfaction with which the House heard it. If the strangers' gallery could have been enlarged so as to seat all the people in Ireland to whom the sound of Mr. Parnell's voice is familiar, what a revelation to their simple minds! What a useful lesson for their contemplation! Mr. Parnell they know is accustomed to stand before them with pale face and quivering lips, denouncing England and all that is English. Mr. Parnell, who presented himself to the House of Commons last night, was a quietly-dressed gentleman, with hair carefully brushed, beard neatly trimmed, and mincing manners, that might have allured to his touch the most timid mouse. There was a delightful unconsciousness about him of all that had happened in Ireland

\* Mr. Courtney up to the time of joining the Ministry had virulently attacked their policy in South Africa.

since the House last met, and of all that might be happening at that very hour. The whole thing was, according to his way of putting it, an abstract question, to be argued quietly in the House of Commons in the languid hour that succeeds dinner. There was the Land League and there were the landlords. They differed as people of diverse interests do. Only one could be right, and Mr. Parnell undertook to show that it was not the landlord. He scarcely presumed in this presence distinctly to affirm that the Land League was right. Of course he had his opinion. But it was not for him to shock the prejudices of English gentlemen misled by the machinations of the metropolitan press. Mr. Irving's success in the dual character of the Corsican Brothers palls before Mr. Parnell's assumption of this new personality. As a dramatic feat it was a triumph of art, and as a crowning success it only needed that, whilst stalls and boxes were full of members of Parliament, the galleries should have been crammed with Irish peasantry.

Jan. 10.—The Member for Woodcock. Mr. Jacob Bright in the course of some remarks to-night accidentally stumbled upon an error which greatly delighted both sides. He alluded to Lord Randolph Churchill as “the noble lord the member for Woodcock,” a mistake which, as he observed when the prolonged laughter had subsided, might have been considerably less appropriate to circumstances.

Jan. 13.—Lord R. Churchill and Mr. Davitt. The questions on the paper being disposed of, Lord Randolph Churchill was instrumental in causing the uproar to break out in a fresh place. He wanted to know whether Mr. Davitt was a convict who had obtained a ticket of leave, a question greeted by loud cries of “Shabby!” by the Parnellites. The noble lord next quoted from the speeches delivered by Mr. Davitt, and concluded, amid cries of “Shame!” from the Parnellites, by inquiring whether it was the intention of Mr. Forster to cancel his ticket of leave. Mr. Parnell, hotly jumping up, quoted speeches in which Mr. Davitt had begged his hearers not to outrage or murder anybody. He particularly wanted to know whether the ticket of leave had been granted during the administration of the late Government, and whilst Lord Randolph Churchill's father was Lord-

Lieutenant. Mr. Forster rather pooh-poohed the whole business, but said the attention of the Government was closely bent upon Mr. Davitt and his proceedings, and if they obliged further action it would certainly be taken.

By an odd coincidence Lord Beaconsfield paid a rare visit to the House to-night, and watched with interest the episode in which Lord R. Churchill figured.

Irish bulls.

In course of the resumed debate on the Address, Sir Patrick O'Brien, rising with the sound of the chimes at midnight, declined any longer to "place his opinions under a bushel," and declared, amid laughter and cheers, that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act would "merely leave the rotting sword festering in the wound." Mr. Gray improved on this, emphatically declaring that of the outrages reported from Ireland, "three-quarters of them were exaggerated and half had no foundation in fact."

Jan. 14.—Lord Hartington.

There is a rumour to-night, doubtless idle gossip, that Lord Hartington, affrighted at the Land Bill, has resigned. The defection at the present crisis of a man like Lord Hartington would mean a great deal, because the public would recognise in it evidence of the upheaval of forces not lightly or habitually stirred. Lord Hartington would be a tower of strength to any Government. It is impossible to overestimate his value to a Ministry with the traditions and tendencies of that now led by Mr. Gladstone. It is obviously absurd to cry out "spoliation" or "confiscation" at the heels of a Cabinet that numbers in its ranks the heir of the House of Cavendish. Lord Hartington represents property in the Cabinet in a sense and to an extent which no other member—not even the Duke of Argyll—does. The Duke of Argyll is something more than a patrician landowner. He is a politician, with strong likes and dislikes, and for the delight of "dishing" somebody he might be induced to sanction a line of policy opposed to his own views and hostile to the interests of his order. Lord Hartington is not a politician, and his strongest hate is reserved for the bores and the boredom from which he suffers, owing to the strange fate that has linked him with politics and Parliamentary life.

Lord Hartington's public career is a paradox that grows the more puzzling the more closely it is considered. He is a statesman *malgré lui*. But still more against the grain as it lies on the surface is the company in which he finds himself. It is impossible to conceive two men more absolutely opposed to each other in temperament and habit of thought than Lord Hartington and Mr. Gladstone, and in less degree this holds good as between the Secretary of State for India and his other colleagues. In social life Lord Hartington's intimate friends are chiefly found on the other side of the House. Thus he lives a dual life, which adds largely to the complexity of the situation. On the Irish policy of the Government, what is called Society does not hesitate to speak in uncompromising terms. Lord Hartington mixes a good deal in certain coteries of society where Lord Beaconsfield is held in higher esteem than is Mr. Gladstone. The Marlborough Club, for example, is not a political institution; but it is, therefore, the more dangerous as a place of resort for a weak-kneed Liberal.

This is a side of politics that does not usually come under review in considering the current of events as affected by a particular individual. But in estimating the character or speculating on the course of Lord Hartington, it would not be altogether wise or fair to leave it out of view. What he hears night after night clamoured by familiar and friendly voices is that the country is going to the dogs; that authority is trodden under foot in Ireland; that property is in danger; and that all this is due to the paralysis of the Ministry. It would not be a very difficult thing for him to justify the step which is so eagerly looked for in certain quarters. If it would be right for Mr. Bright to resign because the Cabinet had decided to take strong measures in Ireland, it could not be wrong for Lord Hartington to retire because the majority had determined to let matters drift a little longer. But the stolid strength of character which has enabled him to resist social and personal temptations has stood by him in this greater peril. He is not a party man, but he is singularly loyal to his party. What might be pleasant for him would be death to it, and in this instance, as in many others before and since he accepted in 1875 the barren inheritance of the leadership of the Liberal

Party, he has sacrificed his inclinations on the altar of what he holds to be the public good.

Jan. 14. — Mr.  
Warton drops  
into poetry.

Mr. Warton is a gentleman who preserves in the present Parliament the unbroken line of eccentric stupidity which the Tory party is able to maintain throughout the ages. There was Sir Charles Wetherell in the pre-Reform era, Colonel Sibthorp in a later epoch, Admiral Elphinstone in the last Parliament, and Mr. Warton in this. These gentlemen vary in shade of genius, but are each alike in the fact of their loyalty to Tory principles, and their unaffected abhorrence of the other side.

Mr. Warton not unfrequently contributes articulated speech to debate, when he distinguishes himself by the violence of his dislike for Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, and his humble adulation for the great man who to-night, descending from his perch in the House of Lords, paid a brief visit to the Commons, curiously peering round on the familiar scene. When Mr. Silas Wegg was making his literary engagement with Mr. Boffin, he stipulated for extra remuneration should he occasionally "drop into poetry." Less mercenary Mr. Warton dropped into poetry to-night without making extra demands on the bounty of the House. The poetry was his own, and was on a par with his prose. Perhaps one verse will suffice as sample :

"Fraud to steal what's not their own,  
Force to keep all they can bone,  
Folly sees no crime thus shown;  
Fraud and Force and Folly."

The House, grateful for any interlude, laughed consumedly, and Mr. Warton spent some of the happiest moments of his life. The scene was, in truth, much funnier than it will appear to the reader, who will only have before him the bare print of what Mr. Warton, with mock modesty, called his "doggerel rhymes." He will miss the spectacle of this grown man, a barrister by profession, and selected by an English borough constituency to represent its intelligence and political aspirations, reading with childish glee these verses that will not scan. To do the House

\* This is Sir S. Northcote's reading of the three F's of the Land Bill.

justice, it was at Mr. Warton more than the humour of his poetical effusion that it roared with uncontrollable laughter.

Jan. 16.—*Advo-  
-cates of order.* There are few things more pleasing to the student of Parliamentary manners than to observe the extreme deference which the Irish members occasionally pay to the forms of the House of Commons. To-night, for example, Mr. Hussey Vivian accidentally lapsed into the impropriety of directly addressing a particular section of members. He had scarcely commenced with his “You” than Mr. Parnell sprang on his feet, calling the Speaker’s attention to the breach of order. Of course Mr. Vivian was wrong, it being a wholesome rule of debate that all speakers should address themselves to the Chair. It is quite true that, five minutes earlier, Mr. Parnell had denounced a statement of Mr. Vivian’s as “a gross falsehood.” It is equally true that Mr. Parnell himself had throughout the night been constantly outraging the first principles of orderly speech, by interrupting members who were addressing the House. It is true that Mr. Biggar, with parrot-like fidelity, had imitated these proceedings, and it is not less true that in whatever part of the House the speakers may stand, if they are in any way obnoxious to denizens of the Irish quarter, they are assailed with constant interruptions. All this makes it more pleasing to note the extreme jealousy for the forms of the House displayed by Mr. Parnell on the occasion noted, and on many others in which English or Scotch members, at last goaded into reprisals by the conduct of the Irish members, lapse into the slightest breach of the rules of debate. It is satisfactory to observe this partial proof of the working of conscience. Irish members love order and themselves eschew it. But they take great care that the average shall be struck in other parts of the House, and whilst persistently seizing every opportunity to flout the authority of the Speaker, they run clamorously to the protection of his apron-strings when their own weapons are turned against them.

*Masters of the House.* These are specific outrages that must recoil on the heads of those who are responsible for them, though probably without creating any impression. What is of more moment to the public is to consider the condition into which

the House of Commons has now drifted. There has been no room for argument, or eloquence, or wit, or humour. In their place we have had invective, assertion, vulgarity, and violence struggling with the forces which now beset it. The House is like a gentleman armed with a rapier attacked by a bully with a bludgeon. He may have skill of fence and supple wrist, but the weapons are ill matched, and in the end he must either suffer himself to be beaten to the ground or must select other weapons more suitable for the encounter. No purpose can be served by pretending that facts are other than they are, and some good may come from putting into plain language the conviction that is in every man's mind. The House of Commons is now perfectly helpless at the feet of Mr. Parnell, and the authority of the Leader of the House is as nothing compared with the influence of Mr. Biggar. It is not a triumph upon which the victors may be congratulated. It is the inevitable preponderance of brute force by which the bludgeon bears down the rapier. The House, with increasing feebleness, persists in hoping that really now Mr. Biggar will learn better, and Mr. Parnell will show himself tractable. This is very creditable to the feelings of the House, and it is not unnatural that it should cling with desperate affection to rules that have through centuries maintained order within its walls. But confidence in these rules has long been shown to be baseless, and is now becoming inexcusable.

Jan. 17.—The axe Further debate on the Address. Mr. T. P. in the lobby, O'Connor delivering a long speech in which a remark to the effect that after certain alleged events the Government "had the cheek" to come down to propose coercion, led to the interposition of Mr. Warton, who solemnly put it to the Speaker "whether 'cheek' was a Parliamentary word?" The Speaker declining to arbitrate in so novel a case, Mr. O'Connor proceeded with his speech.

Mr. Marum having, in the course of a discursive speech, dealt with the Battle of Hastings, was proceeding to inquire how far Continental history bore on the subject, when he was called to order by the Speaker, who pointed out the difficulty of tracing the connection between these topics and the amendment before the House. By way of proving the loyalty of the

Land League in face of calumnious statements to the contrary, Mr. Marum narrated an interesting anecdote, showing how, at a Land League dinner he had attended, a toast was drunk to the health of "The Queen and the rest of the Royal Family." The company insisted upon him (Mr. Marum) responding, "which," he said, "though an unusual circumstance, I did."

Mr. O'Donnell announced that if the axe were waiting for Irish members in the lobby, it would not debar them from doing their duty—a declaration greeted with unsympathetic laughter.

Jan. 26.—At twenty-<sup>two</sup> hours' sitting. Debate on motion for leave to introduce the Protection Bill resumed yesterday and to-day. The morning light breaking through the windows of the House of Commons found members still engaged in discussion of successive motions for adjournment. The night had passed in exceeding dulness. At half-past ten Mr. Gladstone arrived, looking worn and ill. Ten minutes later Mr. Parnell walked in, having hurried across London from the railway station on the arrival of the Irish mail.

Mr. Cowen. At one o'clock Mr. Cowen rose and delivered a powerful and eloquent speech, which in various ways created a profound sensation throughout the House. Mr. Cowen objected to Mr. Gladstone's resolution (that the Protection Bill should be taken *de die in diem*) on the ground that it was a fresh attack on the fast-diminishing rights of private members, and also because it placed Irish members at a disadvantage at a time when the liberties of their country were being confiscated. In burning language he recalled struggles made on behalf of the rights of private members by gentlemen like Mr. Dillwyn and Mr. Rylands, who now sat mute or actively supported the Government. He bitterly attacked officialism, which he described as the grave of Liberalism, and eloquently magnified the position of the independent member. As to the proposed coercion, he said the Government was all-powerful, and would surely come out victor in the struggle with Ireland. It would make a million men mute; but what then? Let them read in history how such a silence was more dangerous than open and angry protest.

The House then divided, Mr. Gladstone's resolution being carried by 251 votes against 33.

Jan. 28.—A conspiracy of silence. Since the Session opened it has been a bitter complaint with the Irish members that they have been the victims of what they are pleased to call “a conspiracy of silence.” English and Scotch members, taking note of the tactics of the obstructionists, have met them in the most practical way by refusing to take part in debate. With a measure of human patience apparently possible only in the House of Commons, they have sat silent night after night whilst Irishmen conspicuously devoid of the wit, humour, or fancy that belongs to their nation, have droned forth dreary diatribes against the Government. One of the practical and most serious effects of this is, of course, to stultify the House as a great debating assembly. It has come to pass that it is “bad form” to take part in debates in the House when the topic is Ireland—and the topic always is Ireland. Members who might contribute useful matter to debate sit dumb, conscious that though they spoke with the tongues of men and angels, they would not be listened to amid the waste of words that threaten to rot away the foundations of orderly debate in the House of Commons.

The Irish members note this circumstance, and bitterly resent it. In the first place, it is a silent rebuke of their own loquacity, which even the most hardened sinner amongst them feels. But, worse still, it throws upon them an added measure of work. If the House is to be kept doing nothing through a sitting from eight to twenty-two hours long, a certain number of words must needs be spoken. The Irish members, being masters of the ceremonies, as well as of the situation, are bound to supply the necessary quantity. If they can only drag into the debate an English or a Scotch member it is so much gained. He fills up whatever space of time his speech may occupy, and, moreover, by introducing fresh matter into the discussion, he supplies Irish members with texts for further interminable talk.

It is impossible for men, however insensible of the iniquity of tautology, to keep going on night after night if they have only their friends to prey upon, though (as Mr. Gray observed the other night, before he proceeded to attack Mr. Blennerhassett for a modest and plucky speech not palatable to the Home Rulers) “If an Irishman is to be attacked, there is never lack of Irishmen to do the job.”

Jan. 29.—A new Member. There are some manifestations of the policy of the Porte, which Western intelligence finds it hard to comprehend. To-night, listening to Mr. McCoan's prodigious speech, one dark space was cleared up, and hon. gentlemen began to understand how the publication of the *Levant Herald* was stopped, and how its editor was politely, but firmly, invited to go away. The Turks are not naturally a vigorous race, and their patience and long-suffering are proverbial. But if they had daily or weekly, or at whatever interval, leading articles prepared on the scale of this speech, and composed in the same spirit of unrelieved dulness, it is small marvel that they should have been finally worked up to a pitch of unusual energy. Mr. McCoan began his oration with a certain diffidence of manner that might, if his exhibition had been less prolonged, have recommended him to the consideration of the House. With one leg coyly disposed on the bench behind, as if it were not for so humble a member as him to present himself to the House with the ordinary number of limbs, he besought a fair hearing for a new member. It was one of the humours of the situation that this speech which he humbly recommended to the House as the effort of a new member was not his maiden effort. He had on several earlier occasions addressed the Chair, though probably he would not regard these as speeches, any more than an admiral of the fleet would look upon a ship's tender as a man-of-war. They were mere exclamations of twenty minutes' length, interjections occupying the space of half an hour. A speech, according to Mr. McCoan, is a performance of two hours' duration, an opportunity supplied to astute members of going home, leisurely eating their dinners, and coming back in time to hear the fifth repetition in the last quarter of an hour.

To-night he brought with him a copy of the Blue Book, containing the returns of agrarian outrages ; but its well-filled columns contained no outrage that would form a fitting parallel to that about to be inflicted on the House of Commons. He began at the beginning, and toiled tiresomely through every column, dulling all the senses of the House save that of resentful impatience.

On an ordinary night this performance would not greatly have mattered. Members would simply have gone away, and come back when they thought Mr. McCoan had finished. But

to-night, as everybody knew, the Premier was waiting to deliver a great speech. Judging from his appearance he would have been better at home in his study, or in bed, than sitting here at the end of a weary week waiting for further work. But he had determined to speak, and the hour for his interposition had been arranged. At ten o'clock he was to rise, and a few minutes before that hour he came in, finding Mr. McCoan, now entirely recovered from his bashfulness, firmly set upon both legs, shaking his eyeglass at an angry House that refused to hear him do a succession of simple sums in arithmetic. As the minutes wore on, the strain on the over-wrought nerves of the Premier painfully increased. It was not only that, when he was weary and longed for the brief interval of rest that midnight might bring, he had to sit and listen to this determined and deliberate attempt at overriding the common freedom of speech. It was not only the natural impatience that a fiery courser feels when, ready to run its race, it finds itself held back by some insensible obstacle. The long experience of the Premier leads him to take a practical view of the value of certain hours for speaking in the House. He knew that all the wires were waiting to flash his words to the furthermost ends of the kingdom, and that at this period of the night every quarter of an hour that advanced was lost opportunity for the full performance of the undertaking. He tossed uneasily on the bench, a crimson flush on his haggard face, and his hands nervously twitching the arms over which they were tightly clasped. But neither the personal suffering of the Premier, the respect due to authority, nor the unmistakable absence of desire on the part of his audience for the continuance of his remarks had the slightest effect on Mr. McCoan. He had been set up in the highway of public business in the House of Commons, a memorial of what Irish humour and eloquence and courtesy have come to in these days; and he was not to be moved by anything less persuasive than a gang of navvies and a four-horse waggon.

It was pleasant to see how, once this worse than Westinghouse brake was taken off, Mr. Gladstone pounded along the course. It has frequently been noticed that whilst, being seated, he sometimes finds it difficult to restrain manifestations of an excitable temperament, the moment he is on his legs he assumes perfect command of himself. One might have thought, seeing

all he suffered whilst Mr. McCoan droned along, that when long-delayed opportunity came he would take some pretty revenge on his tormentor. Perhaps whilst sitting down with hot eyelids pressed over his eyes with intent to shut out the scene, if he might not close his ears against this level voice, he may have framed a sentence or two for Mr. McCoan's discomfiture. But the moment he stood on his feet the flush died off his face, the nervous trembling of his body ceased, and the depression of the hour passed swiftly away. The thunderous cheers with which he was greeted seemed to cleave the air, and the discomforts of the man were lost in the duties of the Minister.

A change. At a word he lifted the debate from the infinitely low and narrow groove along which the member for Wicklow had groped, and for the first time since, twenty-four hours ago, Mr. Bright had stood at the same place, the proceedings of the House of Commons really assumed the character of debate. Incidental reference had to be made to Mr. McCoan, and then with a few light touches the Parliamentary griffin was knocked off the pedestal on which it had stood so long defiant, and playfully rolled in the mud amid uproarious laughter. Mr. Gladstone does not set up to be a humorist, nor does the world cherish many of his epigrams. But for this power of rolling about an inconsiderable but offensive person, he has not his equal in political conflict. His movements are so easy and so full of conscious strength; the inflection of his voice is so dramatic; the beaming smile with which he regards his lilliputian adversary is so provokingly benevolent—these are adjuncts of eloquence which the reader of the newspaper reports grievously misses. But there is one thing against which the most commanding eloquence and the most delicate satire strive in vain. Men like Mr. Healy, Mr. Daly, Mr. McCoan, and an anonymous gentleman with a purple face and a white moustache, who to-night sat on the fourth bench below the gangway in the Irish quarters, cannot answer Mr. Gladstone's argument, and possibly do not understand his sarcasm. But at least they can interrupt him with continuous clamour, can break in upon his unfinished sentences with coarse contradiction, and do insult to the courtesies of the House of Commons by the manners of a mob.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SUSPENSION OF THIRTY-SEVEN MEMBERS.

Tuesday Night: Tired out—Sir Pat.—Lord Beaconsfield—Sir R. Cross interferes—Uproar—Wednesday Morning—Expectation—The Speaker stops the Debate—The Division—The End—In the Afternoon—Mr. Sullivan denounces Mr. Gladstone—Preparations for War—The Arrest of Davitt—Mr. Dillon defiant—The Sergeant-at-Arms—Mr. Parnell named and expelled—“The next to go was” Finigan—“All over!”—The heaviest Man in the House—Mr. Leahy resolves—The Rev. Mr. Nelson—The O’Gorman Mahon—“The Cyard.”

Yesterday (Monday) was the fourth day of the debate on the motion for leave to introduce the Protection Bill, the Irish members entering upon a desperate and reckless course of obstruction, keeping the House sitting all night.

Feb. 1.—Tuesday night. Tired out. At four o’clock this afternoon, the House having been in session twenty-four hours, there were about 150 members present. The air of the House was hot and heavy, and over all there hung a feeling of lassitude and infinite weariness. Only Mr. A. M. Sullivan, outshining his earlier exploits of endurance, was on his legs, as he had been at brief intervals during twenty-four hours, and was now with resonant voice and emphatic gesture protesting against “the perverseness of the Government.” The galleries over the clock were all full, strangers displaying an undying interest in the proceedings. Noble lords on their way down to another place had looked in to behold the spectacle of the House of Commons still sitting. The question at this time was Mr. Healy’s motion for the adjournment, made at eight o’clock in the morning in a speech of two hours and a half duration. The motion was rejected by 225 votes against 21. Mr. Daly then moved the alternative motion for the adjournment of the debate, on which Mr. Sullivan, following his habit of making a speech on each motion, offered a few remarks.

Sir Pat. Mr. Sullivan was followed by Sir Patrick O’Brien, who introduced into the proceedings a liveliness long lacking. Sir Patrick proceeded with unusual quietude for

some time, till he hit upon the declaration that he "was not a lunatic." This statement, introduced with some measure of abruptness and made in a loud voice, succeeded in the now difficult task of amusing the House. The laughter and cheers with which it was received reacted upon the hon. baronet, who thenceforward in animated style declaimed against his compatriots opposite, whom he obscurely accused of "playing a game of spoiled five." He also denounced some anonymous member who, it appears, had been simultaneously attacking him in the columns of a Dublin and a New York paper. The House laughed a good deal whilst Sir Patrick was speaking, but once it broke into a storm of cheering when he declared that, whatever his faults as an Irish member might be, he had never touched one penny of the money of the poor. The Speaker finally recalling Sir Patrick's attention to the question before the House, the hon. baronet cleverly excused himself for his discursiveness by observing that he had for so long listened to the speeches from members opposite that he scarcely knew what the question was.

Lord Beaconsfield. At half-past four Lord Beaconsfield joined noble lords in the gallery, arriving just in time to hear Mr. O'Connor Power express the hope that the debate would continue as long as Irish members could speak a word or drag one leg after the other into the division lobby. It was half-past seven when Mr. Daly's amendment was negatived by 163 against 23. This time Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright were in the House, as was Sir Stafford Northcote. On the figures being announced some surprise followed upon the non-appearance of an Irish member to move that the House adjourn. The Speaker put the question and the amendment, and to some sanguine people it appeared as if the division were about to take place. This pleasing vision disappeared when Mr. Finigan rose and announced that he would now "with extreme pleasure" address himself to the main question. Nevertheless, at the end of a speech extending over an hour and a half he moved the adjournment of the debate. His speech was relieved by one flight of fancy remarkable amid much dulness. Speaking of the Irish landlords, Mr. Finigan declared that "they lived on the sweat of other men's brows." Mr. Gill following, atten-

tion was called to the fact that he had already spoken on the motion for the adjournment. The Speaker said that, by the indulgence of the House, he would still be in order in making another speech on the motion for adjournment, and Mr. Healy further resented interference by moving that the House be counted. Mr. Gill made an inconsequential and occasionally violent speech, which was accompanied by a running commentary from the benches opposite. Having been several times called to order, the Speaker gave him a significant warning, which had the immediate effect of causing him to resume his seat. When Mr. Arthur O'Connor rose with evident preparation for a long speech he was met with some cries of disapprobation; but when he attempted unduly to extend his remarks by lecturing the House and denouncing the Government, the marvellous patience displayed during the past three weeks broke down, and a storm of angry cries interrupted his remarks.

Sir R. Cross inter-  
feres.

Mr. T. D. Sullivan met with a similar reception. He was proceeding no better nor any worse than other members near him, when Sir R. Cross rose, and, recurring to a Standing Order passed two years ago, invited the Speaker to declare under it that the Irish members had been guilty of a combination wilfully to obstruct the business of the House. Mr. Parnell and the Speaker rose together, amid a roar of cries of "Order!" before which Mr. Parnell resumed his seat. The Speaker said if he found there was a distinct and clear combination on the part of members wilfully and persistently to obstruct the business of the House, he should consider that the Standing Order quoted would apply. He was bound to say that the course of the debate had brought before him evidence of the existence of such a combination. He somewhat unexpectedly concluded by calling upon Mr. Sullivan to proceed.

The Speaker now left the chair, it being close on midnight, and Dr. Lyon Playfair presided in his stead. Half an hour later Sir Stafford Northcote, referring to the point raised by Sir R. Cross, asked the Deputy-Speaker at what point the limits would be reached at which the Standing Order might be deemed to apply, and having expressed surprise that no member of the Government had arisen when the question was up before, Mr.

Childers, assuming the lead, in the absence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington, promptly answered the challenge.

"If you think fit," he said, "and I hope you will think fit, to put a stop to this obstruction, you will have the most cordial support of Her Majesty's Government."

Mr. McCarthy entered a spirited protest against what he called "this gigantic innovation." Mr. O'Donnell's remarks, which were followed by Mr. Newdegate with lively manifestations of interest, thrice led to the interference of the Deputy-Speaker. Hereupon there were loud cries of "Three times!" and Mr. O'Donnell sat down after one of the shortest speeches he ever delivered since elected to Parliament. Mr. Dodson made a strong appeal to the Irish members not to protract a barren discussion. Mr. Gorst, amid loud cheers, ridiculed the notion of appealing to the Irish members, and called upon the Deputy-Speaker to declare any member attempting to protract the debate as guilty of obstruction. The Deputy-Speaker read the statement which the Speaker had made earlier, and said he would carefully watch the conduct of the Irish members.

Uproar. Mr. Parnell was addressing the House when an extraordinary scene burst forth. Mr. W. H. Smith again calling attention to the Standing Order quoted by Sir Richard Cross, Sir Stafford Northcote peremptorily demanded that the Deputy-Speaker should name Mr. Parnell. Dr. Lyon Playfair said Mr. Parnell had not gone far into his speech, and he did not think he had yet brought himself within the rule. Hereupon Sir Stafford Northcote abruptly rose and left the House, accompanied by Sir M. Hicks-Beach and other members of the late Ministry, with the exception of Sir Richard Cross. The example was followed by many gentlemen sitting on the back benches, and by a few from the Liberal side of the House. Mr. Parnell continuing, Mr. Milbank excitedly rose and called upon Her Majesty's Government to support the Chair. Mr. Parnell disputed the floor with him, and some cries rose from the Irish members. Mr. Milbank with increased energy declared that Mr. Biggar had addressed to him an opprobrious epithet. Mr. O'Shea, who followed, was greeted with angry cries of "Name, name!" but the Deputy-Chairman still withstood the evident desire of the

House that some one should forthwith be offered up a sacrifice to order. Mr. Bright, rising at a quarter past one, brought the House back to a quieter mood. The Government, he said, did not shirk their responsibility, but alterations of the rules of the House were not to be made at a moment's notice. Mr. Gladstone would very shortly make a proposition which would, he believed, whilst preserving freedom of debate, do something to save the English House of Commons from the discreditable scenes which had of late disgraced it.

Feb. 2.—Wednesday. All night long the babble continued, with more or less volume of sound, according as passion was momentarily raised or remained dead under the weight of sleep and infinite weariness. Now, at nine o'clock, some flux of life pulsated through the chamber. The relays had begun to come in, fresh from bed, and bath, and breakfast. The men who had borne the heat and weariness of the night shook themselves together, yawned, and made for the door. Having reached the lobby they came back again with quickened step and freshened vigour. Something was going to happen. No one quite knew what; but, with the quick intelligence which at particular crises runs through the House of Commons like an electric shock, everybody was certain that momentous events were at hand.

Expectation. At a quarter to nine Mr. Gladstone entered; the pent-up feelings of the now crowded assembly broke forth in a ringing cheer. Dr. Lyon Playfair was in the chair, which he had occupied all night. Suddenly and unexpectedly the stately figure of the Speaker in wig and gown was discovered standing by the chair, which Dr. Playfair with joyful alacrity vacated. Mr. Biggar was on his legs, his rasping voice filling the chamber with nothingnesses, a process on which he had been engaged for upwards of an hour. Mr. Biggar looked up astonished at the thunderous cheer that welcomed the coming of the Speaker. What he saw was the Speaker on his feet bidding him with peremptory gesture be seated.

Mr. Biggar thought his hour was surely come. He had already been suspended, had since been frequently warned, and more than once had been on the very verge of further suspension.

This quick gathering of members silently filling the House but just now empty, this eager expectation on every face, this solemn entry of the Speaker, and these ringing cheers must portend something out of the common. It might be "the axe in the lobby" which Mr. O'Donnell's prophetic vision had beheld some days earlier. Whatever might be in store for him, Mr. Biggar's present duty was to obey the Speaker, and he made haste to sit down, thereafter leaning forward, the customary grin that festoons his countenance being displaced by a look of genuine anxiety.

The Speaker stops Amid breathless silence the Speaker began to read the Debate. from a paper that trembled like an aspen-leaf in his hand. For all his grave aspect and stately quietude, the Speaker is a nervous man, and always brings to the performance of his duty a disturbing consciousness of its momentous character. The task he was now engaged upon was enough to shake the nerves of a stronger man. Never since Cromwell entered the House at the head of his men-at-arms had regular Parliamentary procedure been subject to this swift and arbitrary cutting off by the mandate of a single man. But the Speaker got through his task with great dignity, being strengthened by the burst of enthusiastic cheering that filled up each slightest pause in the reading. When he had made an end of speaking he proceeded in customary manner and in ordinary tone to put the question.

Meanwhile the followers of Mr. Parnell clustered together below the gangway in speechless amazement. The blow was all the more confusing since it found them as sheep without a shepherd. Mr. Parnell had been in his place the greater part of the night, and was now peacefully in his bed, securing the rest necessary for continuing the contest throughout the coming day and the following night. In accordance with Parliamentary usage, the Speaker put the amendment first, a verbose proposition worthy of the genius of Dr. Lyons. The reading of it occupied some appreciable time, affording opportunity to the Parnellites so far to recover as to shout a defiant "No!" when the Speaker declared that he "thought" the ayes "had it."

The division. Then followed the interval for the clearing of the House. Whilst the sand swiftly sped through the glass on the table before the Speaker a deafening buzz of conver-

sation filled the chamber. Members gathered together in little groups excitedly discussing this new and dramatic episode. The prevailing aspect on the crowd of eager faces was one of uncontrollable delight. It was as if to a multitude of hopeless and despairing men there had suddenly come from an unexpected quarter news of complete deliverance. One exception to this general aspect was found below the gangway to the left of the Speaker. Here the Home Rulers gathered together round Mr. Justin McCarthy, each asking the other what was to be done? For the present there was only one thing to be done, and that was to vote for Dr. Lyons's amendment. This they did, forlornly filing out, nineteen all told.

The end. When they came back, there remained fresh opportunity, since what was at present done was that the amendment had been negatived. The question that leave be given to bring in the Bill was yet undetermined, and it was this that the Speaker, again arising, put to the House. In ordinary circumstances quite a fresh debate might have been raised on this new question. It might have lasted for hours or days, being rounded off by another division. Desiring to profit by this opportunity, Mr. Justin McCarthy rose and essayed to speak. But he might as well have gone down to Dungeness the previous week when the storm was raging, and attempted to make himself heard by the people of Boulogne. The House literally roared at him, the cries rising to frantic pitch when a dozen Irishmen leaped up around him and, raising their hands with threatening gesture, cried aloud on that "Privilege" they had so sorely abused. Their cries were drowned in shouts of "Order!" and after a contest of several minutes they bent their heads to the storm with mock obeisance to the Speaker, turned, and left the House.

Then the first reading was carried without dissentient voice, and Mr. Gladstone having given notice of a resolution designed to prevent recurrence of the phenomenon, the House adjourned, after having sat continuously for forty-one hours.

In the afternoon. At noon the House was densely crowded, and when, twenty minutes later, the Speaker took the chair, there was presented to him the spectacle, unusual on

Wednesday afternoon, of every seat occupied. Mr. Parnell coming in a few minutes later was greeted with frantic cheering from the Irish members, who made up in volume of sound what they lacked in quantity of tongues. Mr. Gladstone was loudly cheered from the Ministerial benches when he entered, a few minutes before the Speaker took his seat. Mr. Labouchere "respectfully asked" the Speaker whether his action in closing the debate earlier in the morning had been taken under any Standing Order, and, if so, which.

"I acted upon my own responsibility," said the Speaker, "and from a sense of duty to this House." This answer was received with loud and prolonged cheering from both sides.

Mr. Parnell now interposed, and, starting from the question put by Mr. Labouchere, proposed to submit a resolution declaring that the Speaker, in refusing to permit further debate on the motion for leave to introduce the Protection Bill, had committed a breach of the privileges of the House. This proposal was greeted with cheers from the Home Rulers, and loud cries of dissent from other parts of the House. The Speaker quietly pointed out that the question was one, not of privilege, but of order, and if it were brought forward it could only be done after due notice.

*Mr. Sullivan denounces Mr. Gladstone.* The Speaker having disposed of Mr. Parnell and the O'Donoghue, Mr. A. M. Sullivan came to the front, and was found a much more persistent combatant. At some evident peril, and under repeated warning, he argued the case first with the Speaker and then with the Premier, turning aside from time to time to dispose of interjectory remarks from various parts of the House. After this had gone on for some time, Mr. Gladstone called upon the Speaker to proclaim Mr. Sullivan's observations as disorderly.

The Speaker, however, did not adopt the suggestion, whereupon Mr. Sullivan, rising again, said, "I thank you, Sir, for your ruling, and I thank God that the rules of this House are in your hands and not in his"—pointing, with dramatic gesture, to the Treasury bench, where Mr. Gladstone sat amid his colleagues.

Stormy cries of "Order!" greeted this outburst, but Mr. Sullivan proceeded at further length. Eventually, amid cries

that warned him he had been cautioned three times, he concluded with a motion for the adjournment.

This was carried by lapse of time, and the rest of the orders were run through under the supervision of Mr. Biggar and Mr. Finigan, who, having taken their seats on the front Opposition bench, impartially objected to all but two of the Bills for which formal progress was proposed. These were Irish Bills, and in order to avoid invidious distinctions, Mr. Warton, amid much laughter, rose and completed the round of objections by also blocking these.

Feb. 3.—Preparations for war. That the Government were aware that something remarkable would happen in the House of Commons to-night is certain. Arrangements of an unprecedented character had been made with the object of keeping order. Large bodies of police were distributed throughout the building. Half a hundred stood at ease in the Court Yard, and at a signal through the telegraph wires an additional hundred would have marched down from Scotland Yard. What was less explicable was the extraordinary gathering of strangers, "distinguished" and otherwise. The galleries over the clock are now always filled. Time was when to see this part of the House crowded from front bench to ceiling was a subject of comment. Now it is a matter of every-day occurrence, and it is easier for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven than for any one less than an Ambassador to gain entrance into the Speakers' gallery. To-night the seats, to which admission is gained by ticket, were crammed. The peers' gallery, which sometimes presents vacancies striking amid the throng, was also full, so full that Royalty, in the person of the Duke of Cambridge, stood forlornly in the doorway. The Royal Princesses who came down at half-past five to see the commencement of the comedy were more fortunate. The ladies' gallery is divided into two sections, one open to the orders of members, and the other the private domain of the Speaker. The Duchess of Connaught and the Duchess of Edinburgh found no difficulty in securing places on the front bench, the only part of the ladies' gallery from which the House can be viewed. They found on their arrival Mrs. Gladstone already seated; and presently Lady Granville arriving completed the distinguished party of four.

The arrest of Davitt. The questions on the paper passed over without incident. When they were concluded, Mr. Parnell, rising without notice, abruptly asked the Home Secretary whether it was true that at one o'clock to-day Mr. Davitt had been arrested. This question, conveying to many members the first intimation of the fact, was received with some cheers, which were repeated and prolonged when the Home Secretary answered, "Yes, sir!" When silence was restored, Sir W. Harcourt went on to state that he and the Irish Chief Secretary had come to the conclusion that Mr. Davitt's conduct had been incompatible with the ticket-of-leave by which, as a convict, he was permitted to be at large. Renewed cheers broke forth from the general body of the House, through which cries of "Shame!" came from the Irish quarter. Mr. Parnell asked which condition of his ticket-of-leave Mr. Davitt had violated? This request for further information was met by cries of "No!" from the Ministerialists, and Sir W. Harcourt sat unresponsive. Mr. Parnell jumping up again excitedly, the Speaker, half rising from his chair, motioned to Mr. Gladstone, who advanced to the table and commenced to move the Resolutions amending the Standing Orders of which he had given notice.

Mr. Dillon defiant. He had not advanced many sentences when Mr. Dillon rose, and was greeted with loud cries of "Order!" The Speaker said Mr. Gladstone was in possession of the House, and called upon him to proceed, he having, in accordance with the custom of the House, resumed his seat when Mr. Dillon rose, presumably on a point of order. Mr. Dillon, who also resumed his seat when the Speaker rose, now again stood up. Three members thus simultaneously presented themselves to the notice of the House—the Premier at the table, Mr. Dillon in his place, and the Speaker before the chair. Mr. Gladstone, paying deference to the Speaker, again resumed his seat, leaving Mr. Dillon confronting the right hon. gentleman. Loud cries of "Chair!" "Order!" broke forth from all parts of the House, while Mr. Dillon stood with folded arms silent amongst the clamour.

The House presently grew very quiet, waiting for what might follow on this strange and unprecedented scene. The Speaker was still on his feet, and Mr. Dillon still stood with

folded arms below the gangway. Some members cried "Name! Name!" whilst from the Irish members there came a low, persistent chorus of "Point of order! Point of order!" The Speaker named Mr. Dillon as being guilty of wilful and persistent obstruction, and a piece of paper which Ministers now find necessary to have in readiness was passed along the Treasury bench till it reached the hand of Mr. Gladstone. The Premier rising, and reciting from the manuscript before him, moved in due course that Mr. Dillon be suspended. The Speaker put the question to the House, and it was answered by a loud cry of "Aye!" followed by some shouts of "No!" from the Irish members. All this time Mr. Dillon was standing with folded arms gazing upon the House, the only silent man in the assembly. Mr. Cowen, crossing over to him, appeared to offer some counsel, which was supported by Mr. Labouchere, the result of which apparently followed when Mr. Dillon sat down. Mr. Sullivan remaining seated, and, taking off his hat, called out at the top of his voice,

"Mr. Dillon rose to a point of order. I object to the division."

The Speaker issued the customary order to clear the House for the division. For some moments the Irish members remained seated, but after consultation rose and left the House.

The Sergeant-at-Arms. Owing to the numbers being so greatly in excess on one side, the division took a long time. When the tellers came to the table it was announced that 395 had voted "Aye!" and 33 "No!" The Speaker having recited the figures called upon Mr. Dillon to withdraw. Mr. Dillon replied that he respectfully declined to withdraw. This defiance being repeated, the Speaker called upon the Sergeant-at-Arms to advance. A scene of extraordinary excitement now followed. The Sergeant-at-Arms stood at the corner of the gangway waiting for Mr. Dillon to surrender himself. Mr. Sullivan was shouting out from his place, "On a point of order," an exclamation met by angry cries that he also should be "named." Mr. Dillon still declining to withdraw except force were used, the Sergeant-at-Arms beckoned in a number of attendants, at sight of whom Mr. Dillon rising, consented to go, and walked out amid some cheering from the Ministerialists, and

eries of "Shame!" and "Cowards!" from the Irish members. As soon as he was gone Mr. Sullivan, rising, "respectfully submitted" that in the case of Mr. Bradlaugh debate had been permitted on the question that he be suspended. But the Speaker explained that in that case there had been no order of the House such as he now acted upon. Mr. Dillon had defied the authority of the Chair, and in accordance with a standing order had been suspended. Mr. Sullivan attempting to continue the contest, the Speaker quietly said, "The point of order is disposed of; I now call upon Mr. Gladstone to proceed." Mr. Gladstone approached the table, The O'Donoghue jumping up to move the adjournment of the debate.

**Mr. Parnell named and expelled.** The Speaker ruled Mr. Gladstone was in possession of the House, whereupon Mr. Parnell, rising amid cheers from the Irish members, moved that Mr. Gladstone be not heard. The Speaker again calling upon Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Parnell shouted out, "I insist upon my motion being put." The Speaker having warned Mr. Parnell that his conduct was wilfully obstructive, again called on Mr. Gladstone, who had not proceeded beyond his first sentence when Mr. Parnell, rising again, excitedly insisted upon his right to be heard.

"I name Mr. Parnell as disregarding the authority of the Chair," said the Speaker, and Mr. Gladstone moved his suspension.

The House was again cleared for the division, Liberals and Conservatives walking out in the usual manner; but the Irish members remained seated, Mr. R. Power, the whip, walking round and round as a shepherd's dog guards a flock of sheep. The majority were a long time clearing out, members lingering in the passages to watch the result of this new proceeding. Having communicated with the Irish members, Lord Richard Grosvenor, approaching the table, reported to the Speaker that certain members declined to leave the House. Mr. Sullivan shouted out, "We contest the legality of the proceeding." The Speaker quietly answered that if members did not go into the division lobby their votes could not be counted. After a brief pause the Sergeant-at-Arms was directed to open the door of the "Aye" lobby, and the majority came pouring in. In this division 405 voted for the suspension of Mr. Parnell and 7 against. The figures being announced, the Speaker reported to the House that certain members

having challenged the division, declined to leave and that their votes had not been recorded. He then called upon Mr. Parnell to withdraw, an invitation which that gentleman, always "respectfully," declined. The Sergeant-at-Arms was then ordered to remove him. Mr. Parnell declining to retire except by superior force, four assistants were called in, at the sight of whom his scruples vanished, and he at once rose and left the House amid cheers from the Irish party.

"The next to go Once more Mr. Gladstone approached the table. was" Finigan. His voice betrayed traces of the physical exhaustion from which he was suffering, and it was with some difficulty he was heard. His purpose now was to take note of the fact reported by the Speaker, as to the refusal of certain members to leave the chamber when the division was called, and to assure him of the support of the House in preserving its order. He then reverted to his speech, and had got through a few words when Mr. Finigan rose and moved that he be not heard. The Speaker, proceeding more quickly now as he grew accustomed to the work, promptly "named" Mr. Finigan, and Mr. Gladstone with equal celerity moved that he be suspended.

The House dividing, the Irish members kept their seats as before, the circumstance being reported in the same way to the Speaker by Lord Richard Grosvenor. The Speaker informed the recalcitrant members that they were disregarding the authority of the Chair, and directed the Assistant Clerk to take their names. This Mr. Milman did amid profound silence, just broken by the sound of the distant murmur of the majority penned up in the Aye Lobby. In this division 405 voted for the suspension, and two against. Lord Richard Grosvenor reported the names of the members who had remained seated in defiance of the Speaker's order. But before this was dealt with Mr. Finigan had to be disposed of, and the Sergeant-at-Arms went through the same process as in the case of Mr. Parnell. The Speaker then reverted to the case of the Irish members, 37 in all, who had refused to leave the House.

"All over!" Mr. Balfour and Mr. Gorst, eager in the cause of order, wanted to know whether these gentlemen could be dealt with *en bloc*, or whether it would be necessary to

divide on each expulsion. From this prospect the House shrank with undisguised apprehension, and the Speaker proceeded to put the question, being interrupted by a cry from one Irish member of "No Law!" and the despairing answer from another, "No; it's all over." The House dividing, 410 voted for the suspension of the members named and 6 against. The Speaker then called upon Mr. Barry, whose name was first on the list, to retire. Mr. Barry, echoing the formula used by Mr. Parnell, declined to go except upon compulsion, which was supplied in due form.

*The heaviest man* What was to be done with Mr. Leahy, puffing in the House like a porpoise? This was the question which next presented itself. Mr. Leahy is a gentleman upon whom Nature, feeling the kind necessity of making up the average in some way, has bestowed much adipose matter. He is a heavy man, not in the same sense as Mr. McCoan, Dr. Commins, or Mr. Dawson, for he rarely speaks. But now his opportunity has come, and Ireland, proud of her patriots, might the next morning be thrilled with admiration of the great deeds done by this, one amongst the most silent of her sons. Captain Gosset, already a little "blown" with manifold marching and counter-marching, resulting in the arrest of twenty of the Parnellites, looked with critical eye upon the twenty-first. In the last few years the Sergeant-at-Arms has had his experience of humanity considerably enlarged. He has brought up to the Bar a railway contractor, two printers, and one attorney, severally charged with offences against the high privileges of Parliament. He has arrested Mr. Plimsoll's saltatory movements, and conducted him, still waltzing, beyond the Bar. He has brought up Mr. Bradlaugh, and more than once has had occasion to sally forth from his chair, and by strategic movements interrupt that gentleman's unauthorised advance towards the table. But he never had anything to do with a person so large as Mr. Leahy. Would he go? and if not, could he be carried?

*Mr. Leahy resolves.* Mr. Leahy himself had evidently made up his mind to make the most of his natural advantages. A fine expression of scorn mantled his massive features as he looked towards the Sergeant-at-Arms and the posse of attendants,

some grown grey in the State service, others evidently out of condition with sitting up all night. Ireland should know that there were other patriots in the party besides Mr. Parnell, other defiers of the decencies of debate in addition to Mr. Dillon, other breakers of Parliamentary law beyond Mr. Biggar. Mr. Leahy had been weighed in the balance, and he knew he should not be found wanting. If they had a crane handy nothing would be left for him but submission. But as yet a crane has not been introduced into the machinery of Parliamentary procedure, and in its absence Mr. Leahy felt he could safely defy any of the "superior force" which his colleagues in more or less elegant phrase had severally declared was the only thing that, on their conscience, they could yield to.

In an unfortunate moment for his possible fame Mr. Leahy began to con a little speech, so that nothing should be lacking to his triumph in this new Parliamentary warfare. If he had been content to rise and say, "Mr. Speaker, Sir: I respectfully beg to inform this hon. House that the last time I was weighed the beam kicked at nineteen stone," he would have carried dismay into the cohorts of Ministerialists and Opposition, now combined in hateful conspiracy against unhappy Ireland. But that was not the sort of thing his colleagues were saying. It is true they all began "respectfully," but thereafter branched off into some lines of blank verse, in which Liberty, Freedom, Tyranny, and things of that sort figured in large capitals. Mr. Leahy felt he must do something in the same way, and the effort was fatal. The unwilling movement in his mind paralysed his control over his body, and having struggled through a sentence, faithfully modelled on Mr. Parnell's, he, to his infinite surprise and profound disgust, found himself standing in the Lobby, whither he had unconsciously walked at the mere invitation of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Opportunity comes to a man but once in his life. Mr. Leahy had had his, and it was gone.

The Rev. Mr. Nelson. After this the House saw with a smile the Rev. Mr. Nelson clinging to the post at the cross benches. No one quite knows what Mr. Nelson does in this *galère*. But since his congregation have spared him from the pulpit the House would gladly welcome him in the forum. He is evidently an honest man, though politics are not precisely his *forte*. He

does not speak nearly so often as he would be gladly heard, the loquacity of his colleagues in the representation of Ireland leaving no opening for him, nor indeed for any one else. But when he has found his opportunity, the House has witnessed with amazement his tendency towards gymnastics. He literally dances round his subject, as wrestlers walk round each other, seeking for advantage in the grip. His favourite bench is the front one below the gangway, whence he rose to-night, and whence, when he does succeed in catching the Speaker's eye, members flee in trepidation. It is said that Mr. Nelson is the only man in the House of whom Mr. Gorst is afraid, or at sight of whom pirouetting in the convulsions of oratory the cheek of Lord Randolph Churchill grows pale. The House has seen Mr. Nelson performing a speech, and when it beheld him throw his arm round the post, lean his head back, and look defiantly in the face of Captain Gosset, nothing less was expected than in the course of the next few moments a portion of the cross benches, with Mr. Nelson attached, would be carried out of the House. But it was only the rev. gentleman's playfulness. No sooner, at signal from the Sergeant, had there arrived the four attendants ("whose united ages," as paragraphs in the *Times* occasionally put it, would have "amounted to 260 years"), than Nelson shirked this new Trafalgar, hauled down his flag, and went out.

It was from this very place that Mr. Biggar had been taken early in the proceedings, which, in accordance with precedent, had been carried on in alphabetical order. It was Mr. Biggar who insisted upon that show of force which thereafter accompanied the Sergeant-at-Arms. Mr. Biggar had declared that nothing but superior force would justify to himself his leaving the House. He did not recognise it in the presence of the Sergeant-at-Arms. If he must needs go, he would have the full paraphernalia of force; and to observe him carefully counting the number of men at the Sergeant's command was one of the finest episodes in the long drama. Mr. Metge, a gentleman of whom no one has heard of before, now distinguished himself by the length of his valedictory address, and the determination with which he sat back in his seat and threatened active resistance. But he went without being carried, and so did Mr. Redmond, on whom the fates were a little hard. Never

before has it happened to a duly-elected member of Parliament that he should take the oath and his seat at a quarter to six on Wednesday evening and be expelled at eight o'clock on the following Thursday.

**The O'Gorman Mahon.** Had The O'Gorman Mahon turned recalcitrant

the executive power would have had a tough job, seeing that, though he lacks the flesh of Mr. Leahy, he is large in bone and long in limb. Moreover, his experience in warfare is so varied and extensive that he would have been able to meet whatever form of attack had been decided upon. A man who has not only been general of an army but admiral of a fleet, is not so easy to be taken either at point of the bayonet or by an attack of boarders. Moreover, The Mahon has in his day pinked his man, nay many men. He has been "out" oftener than any of his contemporaries, except, perhaps, M. Paul de Cassagnac. No one could say that when the Sergeant-at-Arms approached him he might not pull out of his coat-tail pocket a case of pistols, and drawing out of one of his boots a pair of jewel-hilted daggers, offer Captain Gosset his choice of weapons. But The O'Gorman Mahon had had a surfeit of glory of that kind. Now what he hankered after was oratorical fame. He has been in the House more Sessions than one, and as yet had not made his mark as an orator. Like a modest gentleman, he had been content to devote the earliest years of his return to Parliament to studying the manners of the new generation. Few men are alive now of those with whom he sat in Parliaments of yore. New men, new manners, oratorical and otherwise, and The O'Gorman Mahon has been content to cruise about, dropping in anywhere where anchorage was possible, and where there was opportunity of studying some new orator. Sometimes he is to be found on the front Opposition bench, sometimes on that behind, occasionally below the gangway amongst his colleagues, still more often on the bench opposite.

"The eyard." It was here he had his famous conflict with a gentleman who objected to the redundancy of his cheering. The O'Gorman Mahon, fixing his interlocutor with a stately stare, rose, walked across the House to the bench opposite, and having vainly endeavoured to induce some of his

friends to convey his "eyard" to the gentleman, he himself returned and handed it. This incident, and the fact that nothing came of the cartel, did not discourage The O'Gorman Mahon in his search after knowledge. Now his opportunity was come, and he felt glad that he had spent all this time in study. Rising to his full height, which is over six feet, and stretching out his hand, he began with leisurely intonation,

"'Tis fifty years ago——"

This, considering the hour of the evening, was a promising exordium, though it smacked a little of paraphrase from *Waverley*. An autobiography of the gallant Colonel commencing at the date named would have been interesting; but the Speaker thought the time inopportune, and at a signal from him the Sergeant-at-Arms advanced, and the amazed Mahon, who had revived on the seaboard of South America the traditions of that Elizabethan era which Lord Salisbury recently mourned, walked out by the side of the Sergeant-at-Arms as a sheep goes to the slaughter.

But all was not over yet, though eight o'clock had struck and the scene had been prolonged over three hours. Mr. Molloy, having escaped inclusion in the general indictment, had an expulsion all to himself. This done, Mr. Gladstone again attempted to make his speech, when Mr. O'Kelly rose and moved that he be no longer heard. Mr. O'Kelly was despatched with a celerity possible only after extended experience. He was named by the Speaker, and the motion of suspension put from the Chair. Mr. R. Power challenged a division, but, being unable to name tellers, the resolution was declared carried, and Mr. O'Kelly was conducted to the door. Again Mr. Gladstone rose; and now Mr. O'Donnell, unfortunately absent when the performance began, hastened to associate himself with the expelled members by moving that Mr. Gladstone be not heard. Mr. O'Donnell was distinguished by having a division taken in his case, when one vote (Major Nolan's) was lodged in protest against the resolution, 311 voting for it. Two more "lives" remained in this curious Parliamentary game—Mr. R. Power and Mr. O'Shaughnessy, who succeeded in obtaining their expulsion by the less discourteous method of remaining seated whilst the division was taken in Mr. O'Donnell's case, and, being named as disorderly, were suspended.

All this had taken three hours and a half, and it was in an almost empty and altogether weary House that the Premier, himself scarcely able to stand, at length commenced to make his speech, with some apparent prospect of being able to finish it. All traces of weariness passed away as he continued, and before he had finished he had added another to the long list of his triumphs of oratory. The peroration in which he appealed to the House to uphold its dignity and traditions was exceedingly fine, and drew forth enthusiastic cheers, not only from Liberals, but from Tories who perhaps never cheered Mr. Gladstone before.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE PROTECTION BILL PASSED.

Mr. Dawson "speaks as a Husband"—Mr. Metge orates—Mr. Macdonald looks down on the Treasury Bench—Mr. Dillon says a few plain Words—Mr. Healy suspended again—Mr. Gladstone—Mr. Parnell—Question Hour—Mr. Gladstone answering a Question—The Questioner puzzled—Mr. Childers—Lord Hartington—Mr. Forster—Sir Charles Dilke—Mr. Ashmead Bartlett's Cares—His Fears—Sir H. Maxwell on Butter—"Old Bill Barley"—More about Butter—Mr. Ashmead Bartlett on Butter and the Ministry.

Feb. 18.—Mr. Dawson "speaks as a Husband." Whilst there are yet spaces left for frescoes on the walls of the Octagon Hall at Westminster, why should we miss the opportunity of preserving for posterity some counterfeit presentment, however inadequate, of the scene in the House of Commons in the first hour of this morning when Mr. Dawson "spoke as a husband?" At present St. George gleams from the walls in silver armour slaying a dragon with parti-coloured scales. Next to this memorial of an older chivalry what fitter pendant could we have than this Knight of Carlow, standing with flashing eye and fearsome shirt-cuffs prepared to die in defence of Mrs. Dawson? Hitherto he has not afforded hints of this heroic temperament. Yet always there has brooded about him a certain nameless terror calculated to

shiver the timbers of the Treasury bench. He speaks very often, but not nearly so often as he takes notes. Early in his career he, with the modesty that pertains to the new race of Irish members, took possession of one of those corner seats which are the prizes of patient Parliamentary service. Here, when Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Bright is speaking, he may be seen, with one leg crossed over the other, listening with sternly judicial air, and swiftly taking notes designed to bring confusion on these hoary heads. When he *does* speak, it is at considerable length and to no particular purpose. Nature has sunk for him an artesian well into the bottomless pit of words, which, duly pumped, makes Parliamentary life sodden. Mr. Dawson can go on for a period of time limited only by his physical strength, pouring forth words with unhesitating volubility, and with a certain appearance of earnestness that suggests a genuine belief that he is influencing debate.

To-night being the seventh in Committee on the Protection Bill, he presented himself in a new light. It was on a motion moved by Mr. Corbet, a gentleman of a curiously decayed appearance, that makes him seem strangely out of place amongst these gay roysterers from Ireland. Mr. Corbet, eminently a family man, desired, as he said, to "protect our wives and daughters" from the operation of the Protection Act, and therefore moved to substitute the words "male adult" for "person" in one of the operative clauses of the Bill. Mr. Dawson did not rise at once. He sat in his favourite attitude, pouring forth his soul on scraps of paper disposed upon his knee. But when the fire was ready, it blazed forth, and the House sat amazed at the force and grandeur of the sentences. As Mr. Dawson stood with folded arms and angered countenance, speaking forth in deep chest-notes the most beautiful things about woman, it was so irresistibly like Sim Tappertit, that members involuntarily looked about for Miggs, and Dolly Varden, and the Blacksmith, and all the other associates of the daily life of that great-souled personage.

"There are," said Mr. Dawson, holding out his arm and displaying his shirt-cuffs, like a flag of truce, to draw the mind of the uproarious crowd opposite to consideration of gentler things, "there are strings in the human heart that had better not be vibrated."

At this the House roared, and Mr. Dawson, indignantly withdrawing the flag of truce, folded his arms, and bending his brow upon gentlemen below the gangway opposite, said, in a voice that thrilled through the assembly—

“I speak as a husband.”

Hereupon the shouts of laughter drowned even the deepest notes of the orator. In the midst of all this ill-timed merriment Mr. Dawson stood fixing his glittering eye upon poor Mr. Dillwyn, who had not laughed nearly so much as any one else, but happened to be in the direct line of sight. When silence was partially restored, he proceeded :—

“If any one dare to lay a hand on my wife, it should only be by stepping over my dead body.”

This was more than the most lugubrious member could stand. The House shook with stormy laughter, amid which Mr. Dillwyn sat silent, fixed by the meaning glance which the impassioned orator sternly fixed upon him the while this word of warning was uttered for whom it might concern.

**Mr. Metge orates.** After Mr. Dawson’s magnificent oration Mr. Metge was a little tame. There is, however, no doubt that Mr. Metge could have equalled the member for Carlow if only he had a share in his possession of the artesian well on the premises. Mr. Metge, as he frankly informed the Committee, is no speaker. Not that this failing is effectual in preventing him from addressing the House. Since he made his maiden speech, one of twenty-eight orations delivered on the occasion when the Sergeant-at-Arms conducted as many members to the door, Mr. Metge has, with great courage, struggled against natural infirmity. When six weeks are occupied in obstructing the passage of what is practically the same measure, the managers of the resisting force cannot afford to be too particular in the means they employ. Mr. Metge has, accordingly, several times been requisitioned for a speech, and though not certain that he could make one, he has never flinched from standing up, shutting his eyes and opening his mouth with intent to see what Providence might send him in the way of words. This morning the supply was unusually limited. Even if he had had words, Mr. Metge now discovered a fresh drawback to oratorical success in the fact that he had no voice. It was there

when he came into the House, for when Mr. Parnell had likened Mr. Forster to General Haynau, and the delicate allusion had called forth some cries for division, Mr. Metge had answered back with a cry of "Shame!" a remark not addressed to Mr. Parnell, but to gentlemen opposite. But now, being on his legs, with the Senate hanging on his lips as it were, he could not find his voice. First it seemed to be travelling up and down his legs, moving them with strange contortions. This Mr. Metge overcame by fiercely walking a stride or two out on the floor of the House, and returning. Then it got into the crown of his head, whence it presently was heard issuing with a strange sense of distance. What Mr. Metge wanted to know, with such echo of voice as was left to him, was, "What was Mr. Forster going to do with them?" meaning the men of Ireland.

"Do you," he continued, taking a stride nearer the Treasury bench, so that Mr. Forster might catch the rumbling sound of the voice with greater distinctness, "mean to shoot us like dogs?"

Mr. Forster made no answer, and silence, of course, giving consent, Mr. Metge now had it all clear. "Very well," he said, as if the point were quite agreeably settled, and thereafter went on, sometimes visited by his voice, occasionally bereft, but always standing well out on the floor, glaring on the unfortunate Chief Secretary for Ireland, who, likened by Mr. Parnell to General Haynau, and accused by Mr. Healy of being a lady-killer, bent his head before this new storm, and sat with his face buried in his hands whilst Mr. Metge's voice played hide-and-seek with his indignation.

Feb. 25. — Mr. Macdonald looks down on the Treasury bench. It would be difficult to say off-hand which enjoyed more the oration delivered by Mr. Macdonald to-night, just before the Protection Bill passed its last stage—the orator or the House.

Of the pleased delight of the former there could be no doubt. Standing well out on the floor, so that every one could see him, and raising his voice higher and higher as wicked men on the benches behind lured him on with seductive cheers, Mr. Macdonald surpassed all his former triumphs. Balaam, called upon to "bless these people altogether" on the Treasury bench, turned and cursed them with terrible wrath. Recreant to their earlier faith, they had individually attached themselves to some

popular cause, and sold it for place and power. Mr. Macdonald put the case much more beautifully than that; but that is what he meant. It was here that he broke forth into the most fearsome passages of his oration, causing Mr. Forster's hair literally to stand upright, and making Mr. Bright's flesh creep on his portly figure. There was a right hon. gentleman who was always talking about Injia.

“Injia! Injia! Injia!” he exclaimed, with thrilling voice, slowly drawing his outstretched finger along the space represented by the bench opposite, as if he saw the fateful word flaming on the snuff-box of Mr. Warton, beaming on the broad bosom of Mr. Leahy, and glowing with a blue flame on the low-crowned white hat of Mr. Lalor.

“Then,” he continued, “there was another right hon. gentleman who made Greece his tie,” and there were others who battened on Bulgaria, championed the Zulus, and shed tears over a foreign race, to whom Mr. Macdonald distantly alluded as “the Basywters.” These words look poor in print, for no written phrases can convey an adequate idea of the effect wrought upon the assembly by the wrathful voice and the impassioned gesture of the outstretched hand and the accusing forefinger.

With all the art of a practised orator, Mr. Macdonald saved his finest passage for the last. After drawing a picture of the condition of Ireland, which presented a strange jumble of facts; after having personally denounced various traitors on the Treasury bench, and having mentioned the fact that “Greece was dead till the Liberals went back to those benches,” Mr. Macdonald declared, in tones wherein indignation struggled with sorrow, that he was “ashamed of the Radical party.” As for the Liberals, what were they about to do? They were about to pass this Bill.

“Aye!” said Mr. Macdonald, standing a little further out, so that he might with greater facility fix his flashing eye on the unfortunate statesman whom accident made leader of the House this night. “Aye!” he repeated, stretching out his arm to fullest extent, and shaking his forefinger at the doorway, “the Liberal party is about to pass out of that door with the dead body of the liberties of Ireland, accompanied by the deaf mutes on the Treasury bench who will assist at its burial.”

Why professional mutes should be also deaf was not at the moment quite clear, as, indeed, there was obscurity about the appropriateness of many polysyllables that found themselves in strange company in the course of the oration. Doubtless the explanation is to be found in the fact that on the Orders of the Day a measure known as “the Blind and Deaf Mute Children Bill,” stood for second reading. However it be, genius, as it were, in a flash, had added a new horror to funeral service, and made the mutes deaf. So impressive was the language, so dramatic the gestures, that the conscience-stricken Ministerialists could verily see, in their mind’s eye, the reality pictured by the orator. They could behold Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, Mr. Forster, and Lord Hartington walking out, bearing shoulder high a bier, on which reposed the figure of Mr. Biggar, representing the liberties of Ireland, whilst behind, with solemn, noiseless footfall, followed the Liberal party, henceforward, and for evermore, deaf and dumb.

After this everything was stale and unprofitable, and there seemed to be only one more thing wanting, and that was the division. As it was there were still speeches to be made, and it was half-past twelve before the division was called. Even when the question was settled by a decisive majority against Mr. McCarthy’s amendment, Irish members would not let the Bill go. Like the Poet Laureate in his celebrated struggle with the old year, they clung upon its departing skin, and would fain have had it tarry yet awhile. The second division affirmed the third reading. But there still remained the formal question, “That the Bill do pass,” and once more Irish members besought for a little delay. All through Mr. Arthur O’Connor’s speech might be heard the refrain—

Old Bill, you must not go;  
So long as you have been with us,  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old Bill, you shall not go.

But the end of all things must come, even of a debate on the Protection Bill, and shortly after one o’clock in the morning the Speaker cut the still tangled thread by peremptorily declaring that the question should be put. It was put accordingly, and the Protection Bill finally left the House of Commons, and with it

passed away the remarkable condition of affairs which has for six weeks held Liberals and Conservatives in unshaken alliance.

Mar. 3.—Mr. Dillon says a few plain words.

Mr. Dillon, making his appearance after some days' absence, denounced the Arms Bill as unnecessary and cowardly, bitterly attacked the Home Secretary for his remarks, which he also characterised as cowardly, and speaking on the general condition of Ireland, declared that if he were a tenant farmer and were evicted, he would shoot the man who came to evict him. He admitted that he had advised the people of Ireland to obtain arms, and he now maintained the appropriateness of the advice. The treatment received by members of the Land League was calculated to lead people who had the means into civil war, and Mr. Dillon only regretted that they had not the means. The Speaker, rising to order, said it exceeded the bounds of Parliamentary language to advocate civil war. Mr. Dillon withdrew the expression, but proceeded to enlarge upon the sentiment. The Home Secretary said the case was now concluded, and there was nothing more to be said. If he had not proved his case for the necessity of the Arms Bill, he had summoned a witness who before the House of Commons had proved it, and had made a frank confession of the true spirit, the true character, and the true nature of the Land League.

Mr. Healy suspended again.

Mr. Gray and Mr. McCoan hastened to dissociate themselves from the language of Mr. Dillon; but Mr. Healy felt under no obligation to do so. He proceeded to accuse the Home Secretary of deliberate untruth, and when called upon by the Speaker to withdraw, fenced with the request for some time, till he was peremptorily ordered to withdraw the expression. This he did to the extent that he graciously explained that "the words had slipped from him because he could not for the moment think of any other." After proceeding for some short distance further, he alluded to "the usual disingenuousness of the Home Secretary." The Speaker thereupon named him as disregarding the authority of the Chair, and Mr. Gladstone in due form moved the resolution that Mr. Healy be suspended from the service of the House. On the question being put, the resolution was carried by a majority of 218, only 15 members voting in the negative.

Mar. 4.—Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone came back to the House to-night, wearing a black skull-cap, in token of the recent disaster in the back garden in Downing Street, when he slipped and fell on leaving his carriage. He looked a little thinner in the face, and observed the precaution of going away early, thus missing the second series of exciting scenes that broke out at a later hour of the sitting. This early retirement was an admission of physical weakness the more remarkable since the Premier is not ready at making them. But, apart from this and the black skull-cap, no one would have known the fresh peril this wonderful septuagenarian had so recently gone through. Several questions were addressed to him, and he answered them with all his usual spirit, and, as far as Mr. O'Donnell was concerned, with the sly humour with which he sometimes varies his grave speech. When he was not addressing the House he was busy in animated conversation with some of his colleagues. He had not of late seen so much of Lord Hartington and Mr. Bright as is his wont, and now he made up for it, conversing with them with those animated gestures and that eager countenance which Lord Beaconsfield's greater wisdom regards as undignified phenomena on the Treasury bench.

Mr. Parnell. Mr. Parnell has retired from the militant attitude he once assumed. His great power of sustained work and his unwearied attendance on the sittings of the House formed no small part of the secret of his success. He used to be the first to come and the last to go. He was always in his place ready to take objection to fresh points as they arose. He seemed as unassailable by fatigue as he was implacable in his opposition. With such a leader his followers should be ashamed to show hesitancy or to plead fatigue. But Mr. Parnell has been an altered man from the day Davitt was arrested. He has never recovered from the effects of the prompt action against himself when, in company with his following, then thirty-five strong, he was suspended from the service of the House.

Mar. 18.—Question hour. If there were no other cause for congratulation on Sir Charles Dilke's promotion to the Treasury bench, it might be found in the fact that being there he supplies various models of Ministerial answers to miscellaneous questions.

“Question hour” has come to be one of the most important sections of a night’s sitting. Within this brief space of time there is frequently compressed a series of speeches dealing with the most pressing topics of the day. Whatever may be the condition of the House at subsequent stages of the sitting, it is always crowded at question time. A Minister has then a full and unwearyed audience, and the temptation to oratorical display, or to demonstration of superior ability, is very strong. Lord Beaconsfield, when in the House of Commons, used to pull himself up for a supreme effort when called upon to answer a question, however simple. It had come to pass that something unusual was expected, and he generally endeavoured to meet expectation. Always at his best when his speech was briefest, he rarely missed the opportunity of scoring a success when any adventurous member tried a fall with him at question time. Sir William Harcourt, who has made a careful study of the late Premier’s manner, did not fail to observe this particular phase of it. The Home Secretary lays himself out to “put down questioners,” often with conspicuous success, though this is too frequently lessened by a consciousness of the effort. It is much more easy to be smart than accurate, and it costs some people less effort to be sparkling than to be informing.

Mr. Gladstone Mr. Gladstone is one of the Ministers who is seen answering a question to least advantage when answering questions.

He is nearly always too long, and very frequently conveys an impression to the mind of the listener that he is not telling all he knows. This doubtless, is invariably the case when a Minister is publicly questioned on a matter of policy. But that does not affect the charge of failure incurred by making the condition too evident. Occasionally Mr. Gladstone’s involution of phrase, his sometimes bewildering verbosity when answering a simple question, probably arise from pressure of work. It often appears that he has not considered a question till the very moment it is put to him. Hence his habit of reading the question aloud from the paper in contravention of the wholesome rule, re-established last session at the instance of Mr. Joseph Cowen, by which questions are taken as read, and an average of half an hour of the most valuable time of the House is saved. Whilst the Premier slowly reads the terms of the question, it is

not difficult to perceive that his mind is bent upon consideration of what he should say in reply, or rather what he should not say. When a question has not been placed upon the paper, but is suddenly sprung upon him in the House, this mental process is carried out in another and much more bewildering fashion. No time is given in such case for reflection. The question is put, and a Minister must forthwith appear at the table and reply. The Premier rarely takes refuge in the right of Ministers to demand that notice should be given. He begins his answer at once, or rather appears to begin. With slow intonation he commences a sentence, which when finished will stretch from Westminster Hall to Charing Cross, and has many more turnings off into by-paths, from which it threatens never to return. By the time this stupendous work of art is completed the Premier has decided upon the kind of answer he should give, or whether he should refuse to give any at all. Frequently the latter is the case, and he speaks for three or four minutes, with every appearance of winning confidence, and at the close of his remarks he has not disseminated a particle of information.

The questioner So frank has been his manner, so friendly his puzzled attitude, and so extended his remarks, that the member immediately concerned cannot grasp the truth that he has received no answer at all. A murmur of conversation arises throughout the House, members eagerly comparing notes, and endeavouring to make up from the aggregate of intelligence some glimmer of information. In the meantime the next question is called on, and opportunity for inviting further elucidation is lost. It sometimes happens that, as the questions proceed, and an interval of twenty minutes elapses, the bewildered questioner so far recovers from his condition of stupor as to repeat his question, or a part of it, in another form. But he never greatly profits by this audacity. Mr. Gladstone, always courteous, will obligingly repeat with boundless variation some of the more meaningless of the assurances or explanations previously given, and the querist will feel more than ever like Mr. Willett when seated bound in his chair at the "Maypole" during the visit of the rioters, with a dim consciousness that there was something going on in the bar which he could not fully grasp. It often happens that this condition of mind lasts throughout

the night, and is solved only when on reading in the morning papers the precise words of the Premier he will find how skilfully they evaded meaning.

**Mr. Childers.** Mr. Childers's answers are clear, though somewhat inclined to be prosy. This arises from a commendable desire to be frank, and to show that in his department at least all is above-board. If Mr. Childers were asked how many buttons there were on a marine's jacket he would not be satisfied with the simple declaration of the numeral. He would set forth as in a schedule how many lay in a row on the left breast, how many on the right, the number and precise position on the wristband, or, if none, why, and would probably throw in a few details as to the length and resisting power of the shank.

**Lord Hartington.** Lord Hartington's very worst Parliamentary appearances are made when he approaches the table to answer a question. He also is animated by the honourable desire not to conceal anything that may be possible to communicate without disadvantage to the public service. But it happens that the traditions of the office he now holds are peculiarly adverse to indulgence in frankness. In dealing with Oriental races it has come to pass that the Indian Department has had to adopt something of Oriental subtlety, and Lord Hartington, uncomfortable under circumstances that do not assimilate to his character, has acquired a halting and occasionally involved style of answering questions. If he would only consent to be briefer it would be better. If a man has nothing to say his message is best delivered in the fewest words. There is not bestowed upon every man the dangerous gift of saying nothing whilst apparently indulging in an unchecked flow of words.

**Mr. Forster.** Mr. Forster's answers are handicapped by circumstances of diverse character. In the first place the Orders are weighted with such a preponderance of questions from Irish members, either venomous in their intent or purely local in their bearing, that the answers of the Chief Secretary do not attract much notice. Whether the Postmistress of Ballymahoy really has inducted her curly-headed nephew into a Government office worth eighteenpence a week is of great

human interest, but the circle is not wide. The same objection applies to the larger and apparently inexhaustible list of questions typified by the one wherein the Chief Secretary is asked to say whether he is aware that Mr. M'Swiney, chairman of the Clonakilty Town Commissioners, had his chair pulled from under him in the course of argument at the last meeting. A Minister is bound to answer questions of this kind if the Speaker permits them to appear on the Orders, and it is his misfortune rather than his fault that he shares in the temporary degradation of the proceedings of Imperial Parliament to the level of a parish vestry or a police-court. When another class of questions, of the highly argumentative and studiously ironical kind, are addressed to Mr. Forster, he insists upon taking them seriously, and gives a laboured answer, in which we have dragged in, not very far in the background, that familiar lay figure of Quaker parentage with its rugged honesty, its simple devotion to duty, and its general condition of human perfection. It is perhaps too much to expect that a Chief Secretary who has now been in office more than twelve months should have any mirth remaining in his composition. But Mr. Forster answering a question put in the highly sarcastic vein possessed in common by Mr. Callan and Mr. Biggar is a melancholy and provoking spectacle.

Sir Charles Dilke. Sir Charles Dilke's answers are perfect, whether in regard of manner, matter, or style. A small grant of public money might be much worse expended than in reprinting his answer to two questions put to-night on the subject of Anglo-French commercial relations, having them framed and glazed, and hung up in the bed-room of every Minister. A good test of the perhaps unconscious skill and natural art with which the answer is drawn up would be for any one to take the verbatim report which appears in this morning's papers and attempt to make it shorter. There is not a word too much in it. It occupies just twenty-eight lines of print, and it contains a clear and full account of an exceedingly intricate negotiation. The majority of the answers given by Ministers in their places in Parliament appear much better in print than when spoken, redundancies being cut out, parentheses put straight, and hesitaney of manner not appearing. But to the orderly mind and clear intelligence which instinctively bring uppermost

and in due sequence the principal points of a question, Sir Charles Dilke adds a frank manner, a clear voice, and an easy delivery.

Apr. 1.—Mr. Ashmead Bartlett's cares.

History records that Napoleon while directing the campaign on Moscow found time to draw up a code of regulations for the *Théâtre Français*. But no amount of reflection upon this achievement diminishes the marvel with which we behold Mr. Ashmead Bartlett dis- coursing on butterine. Napoleon, more particularly at the epoch of his Russian campaign, had a good deal to think of. But his concern was bounded by a single continent. It is no exaggeration to say that Mr. Ashmead Bartlett has three continents on his mind, and when we take into account the fact that the foundation is not very robust, we can form some conception of the mental strain. Asia is his first love, and, as the House knows, when he looks forth with troubled eyes on the Cossack swimming his horse across the turbulent flood of the Indus, or the wily Muscovite playing on the ingenuous mind of the Afghan Ameer, he rises to heights of eloquence which find fit parallel only in the inspiration of prophets of old. With scarcely less devotion has he studied geography and affairs in Eastern Europe. The blue depths of the Bosphorus hide no secrets from him, and he knows more of the motives of Eastern and Western potentates than accredited Ministers ever dreamed of. To the care of these vast continents have lately been added the affairs of Africa. These he, as it were, lightly grasps in his teeth, whilst firmly holding in either hand the threads of government among the motley nations of Europe and Asia. We still retain on our copper coinage a draped figure sitting on a wheel, the rearward protuberance of a large chignon being balanced by a three-pronged fork skilfully held out in the front. The position is obviously an uncomfortable one. Britannia would doubtless be glad to retire. If this could be arranged let us have for insignia of watchful patriotism Mr. Ashmead Bartlett with one eye on Asia, the other on Europe, and his firm right hand resting on the dewy mane of Africa.

His fears.

Early to-night, before the butter was brought in, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett had wrestled with the forces that would reduce England to the position of a province,

and would make her broad-bosomed harbours dry docks, where the insolent navies of the world might drop in to be copper-bottomed. It seems that Mr. Bartlett had discovered in a French newspaper an account of the rapid advance of the Russian railway from the Caspian Sea to Herat. This confirmed his worst fears. No room was left for doubt of the fact. The most trustworthy person in the world (the correspondent of a Paris newspaper) had made the statement, and there was nothing more to be done except that Lord Hartington should withdraw any statement he may have made to the contrary, and that the policy of Her Majesty's Government in respect of Central Asia should forthwith be reversed. It was a pretty long question as it stood on the paper. But Mr. Ashmead Bartlett proposed to "make it plain," as he said, by reading two extracts. He was not unprepared for what followed. When he rose the paid emissaries of Russia who sit below the gangway opposite, and the hirelings of the Boers who throng the benches behind Ministers, howled at sight of him with this damning evidence of Ministerial infamy. But Mr. Bartlett would dare more for his country than the contumely of such as these. "Only five minutes," he said, it would take him to read the extracts; but read them he must. Then the cries grew louder. Wicked men near him, with tongue in cheek, cheered him on, and humorously dug their elbows in each other's ribs in anticipation of what they called "sport." Minions opposite called, "Name, Name!" and ribald laughter rang through the Assembly as the Patriot Member stood at bay with a carefully made translation from the Paris newspaper, which would take only five minutes to read, and must lead to the resignation of the Government.

Then the Speaker interposed, and showed by his remarks in what unsuspected places the wiles of Russia had prospered. But not even the authority of the Speaker could make Mr. Ashmead Bartlett shrink from doing his duty to his sovereign and his country. For several minutes he withstood the clamour. It was only when Mr. Alderman Lawrence rose to order that his courage wavered and his determination shook. There is something in the voice and the mien of the alderman calculated to overawe. What the clamour of honourable gentlemen opposite, the ill-timed merriment of pretended friends near him, and the suspicious intervention of the Speaker, failed to do, Mr.

Alderman Lawrence effected. Mr. Ashmead Bartlett sat down with the extracts unread, and the doomed Empire blindly blundered on along its mad course to destruction.

**Sir H. Maxwell on butter.** It was in the later portion of the evening that Mr. Ashmead Bartlett displayed the wide range of his information by discoursing on butter. The subject was introduced by Sir Herbert Maxwell in an ingenious speech, in which the keen eye of Mr. Chamberlain subsequently detected Protection. The honourable baronet had evidently made a profound study of the subject, and nothing was wanting to the elucidation of it except that, as was done with the cat, and as is frequently done with respect to war maps, samples should have been placed in the library for the inspection of hon. members. Nothing could have been more pleasing to the eye or more instructive to the mind than a row of firkins of the various materials which triumphant science has evolved in substitution of butter. Perhaps the only mistake he made was in respect of soapstone. He certainly gave rise to the suspicion in the minds of his hearers that he thought soapstone was a preparation of soap. Otherwise his paper was interesting and well informed.

**Old Bill Barley.** Mr. Arthur Moore next fulminated on the butter question, and incidentally dispelled a misapprehension grown up in the minds of members who have heard his speeches in the last two Parliaments. Mr. Moore's Parliamentary oratory is in one respect like the manner of speech of the engaging old gentleman who eventually became Herbert Pocket's father-in-law. "Old Bill Barley's" remarks, it will be remembered, used to "rise and fall like gusts of wind." Thus Mr. Moore when descanting on the wrongs of Ireland is accustomed to commence in a pretty level tone, and suddenly, with ever-increasing velocity and volume, to conclude in uplifted tones of passion that frighten timid men. It was thought that this peculiarity was due to emotion consequent upon meditation on Oliver Cromwell and other more or less remote authors of Ireland's wrongs. But butterine has apparently precisely the same effect upon the hon. gentleman's oratorical manner. He worked himself up into paroxysms of passion over the iniquity of

some person, happily anonymous, at the East End of London, who had blandly offered to supply a friend of his with butterine, and had added, "If you would like to have it put up in Irish firkins I dare say we could oblige you." Nothing could be more courteous than this or more accommodating; yet, to hear Mr. Arthur Moore mention the fact, one would think not only that butter *would* melt in his mouth, but that it had done so, and had horribly scalded him.

More about butter. Then there was Mr. Brown, whose military studies have left him time to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the component parts of butter and its many imitations. Also Mr. O'Sullivan, most natural of humourists, who was able to show quite clearly, from the disclosures made in respect of butterine and oleo-margarine, that the only thing open to the Government in order to settle the Transvaal, pacify Afghanistan, checkmate Russia, move the Porte, satisfy Greece, and obtain a renewal of the commercial treaty with France, was to prohibit the importation of Scotch silent spirit into Dublin, and so prevent that practice of blending which is at the root of all national evil. Finally, there was Dr. Lyon Playfair, with quite an interesting lecture on oleo-margarine—a name the exquisite modulation of which is worth an extra penny in the pound.

Mr. Ashmead  
Bartlett on but-  
ter and the  
Ministry.

It was when all these frivolous triflers with the fringes of science had frittered their hour away that Mr. Ashmead Bartlett rose. He had been sitting gloomy and attentive throughout the evening. Sometimes a pitying smile flitted across his face as he listened to these people chattering commonplaces about aromatic fat, percentage of water, and proportion of cheese in 100 lbs. of lentils. His eye pierced the thin texture of the butter-cloth, and beheld beneath the whole sad truth. It was not pure butter that Britain wanted, but pure patriotism. It was not corrupt practices in butterine that called for denunciation, but blind panderings to the wiles of a foreign Power. It was, in short, as Mr. Ashmead Bartlett showed, rising in the last moments of the debate, that Mr. Gladstone and his Ministry "had no foreign policy save that of forwarding the interests of

foreign nations at the expense of their own." Hence butterine, hence suine, and hence the melodious but misleading oleo-margarine.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE MEMORIAL TO LORD BEACONSFIELD.

Resignation of the Duke of Argyll—Jeremiah—The Constitutional Member—The mourning Philomel—Mr. Whitley—The Chief Blocker—“My Friend and I”—Mr. Gladstone on Lord Beaconsfield—Mr. Tom Collins challenged.

Apr. 7.—<sup>Resignation of the Duke of Argyll.</sup> In the House of Lords to-day the Duke of Argyll made a statement confirming the announcement of his resignation of the office of Lord Privy Seal. He stated that the sole difficulty with his colleagues was in relation to the Land Bill. The duke gave expression to the profound regret with which he severed himself from his colleagues, and more particularly from Mr. Gladstone, with whom he had held close political connection for twenty-nine years, resulting in ever-increasing affection and respect.

Apr. 8.—Jeremiah. If it were the fashion, which, happily, at present it is not, to have *tableaux vivants* from Old Testament history, it would seem that Mr. Chaplin was predestined to assume the character of Jeremiah. There are extant no contemporary portraits of the prophet; but it is not difficult to imagine the member for Mid-Lincolnshire, appropriately dressed, standing behind the front Opposition bench in the House of Commons and uttering his plaint in the character of Jeremiah. Even as it is, appearing in modern British garb, Mr. Chaplin makes a most effective appearance. To-day he had added to many natural advantages a dexterous curl falling limp over his forehead, as if crushed with meditation on the manifold shortcomings and far-goings of Mr. Gladstone. His method of speech-making is peculiar. He sits with fitful regularity at the corner seat of the third bench behind ex-Ministers almost directly opposite Mr. Gladstone. Here, in an atmosphere strongly impregnated with the perfume of Mr. Warton's snuff-box, he broods on the fallen greatness of Great Britain.

Here come back to his memory the words of the elder Jeremiah, with their strange appropriateness to the circumstances of the day—"Oh, ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem : for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction." If Mr. Chaplin were put in the witness-box, and asked to state precisely where Tekoa lies, and from what railway station you start for Beth-haccerem, he might be at fault. But he has strong convictions that the precise locality in the North alluded to is Midlothian.

*The constitutional member.* One or two sentences smacking of Lord Beaconsfield's style having occurred to Mr. Chaplin as he sits and meditates, the next thing is to find an opportunity of delivering them, strung together with whatever minor words may present themselves. It is no use wasting them in haphazard way at question time, or on a chance motion to read a Bill a second time. Mr. Chaplin feels that when by the slow process of agglomeration he becomes possessed of sufficient sentences to form a speech, fitting opportunity for its delivery should be provided at the expense of the State. He is not one of your ordinary members who potter about acts of legislation and petty details in committee. Not that he is not willing to take his part in such discussion, especially if he has a sentence or two ready. But primarily he is of the order of the Constitutional member, like Mr. Walpole, Sir John Mowbray, and Mr. Newdegate. He likes the solemn bustle of a discussion on a point of order. Above all his soul is uplifted by the opportunity of discussing the general conduct of a Ministry on a formal motion. There is a good old-fashioned Constitutional ring about this procedure which endears it to him.

Having been silent for some time, several sentences had been distilled from surrounding circumstances, and had dropped into the reservoir of Mr. Chaplin's mind. One in particular, which came to him the other night, he felt must be worked off before Easter. This is it :—"Sir, I hope that never again in the history of this ancient Empire there may come a time when this Imperial Parliament shall separate on the eve of Passion week with such a sense of shame, with so profound a feeling of humiliation." There were several other turgid echoes of Disraeli

lian denunciation which had accumulated in the same way. But they might, if circumstances were persistently hostile, be allowed to stand over. They might come in at some stage of the debate on the Land Bill; but Mr. Chaplin very rightly thought that the sentence quoted was not to be lost. Obviously turning upon the word "separate," it could not very well be used immediately on reassembling. He must make the speech. But how? A constitutional debate must be raised on the question of the adjournment for the Easter holidays, and Sir Stafford must prepare the way for this sentence by opening the debate, and so giving it due importance. Sir Stafford would very much rather have caught the early train for Exeter. But he is too good-natured to refuse anything, and accordingly, as much to his own surprise as to that of the House, he found himself on the formal motion for the adjournment for the Easter recess, arraigning the Ministry and, really with a good deal of energy, denouncing their various and invariable wickednesses.

The mourning Philomel. All this time Mr. Chaplin sat on the corner seat behind, with a piece of paper in his hand which from time to time he furtively regarded. No one suspected that he was at the bottom of the business, and little imagined that on the innocent-looking piece of paper in his hand there burned the terrible sentence written above, with one or two others of only slightly diminished force. He meant to speak now, but so depressed were his spirits, and by consequence so slow his action, that Sir John Lubbock had nearly come in between him and the House. The hon. baronet gave way at sight of this melancholy figure, and at the first tremor of this mournful voice.

*"Qualis populea totam Philomela sub umbrâ  
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen  
Integrat, et moestis late loca questibus implet."*

So Mr. Chaplin spoke, he the mourning Philomel of the Conservative party. Not poplar shade had he where under to sit and weep, and for bough whereon to rest there was nothing more than the hard, unyielding bench above the gangway. But these advantages foregone, the bird of which Virgil sings in mournful melodious verse did not more successfully fill the places round with piteous complaint.

Apr. 29.—Mr. Whitley. The House of Commons probably possesses no completely parallel example of the fall of human greatness supplied by the case of Mr. Whitley. It is little more than a year since the member for Liverpool was the most important political personage in the country. The occasion of his taking his seat in the House was marked by an outburst of enthusiasm on the Conservative benches that went far beyond the accustomed ebullitions. He was stared at in the House, pointed out in the lobbies, and scrambled for by able hostesses in society. Sir Richard Cross was glad to bask in the reflected light of his popularity. He never missed an opportunity of hooking his arm in that of the member for Liverpool, whether going out to divisions or pacing the corridors, and it was matter for much dispute as to which was the more pleasing sight, the ex-Home Secretary regarding through his spectacles a world which he found very good, or Mr. Whitley beaming about him like a beneficent lighthouse over an agitated sea. Mr. Whitley represented a great deal more than Liverpool and a seat saved. It was as if in a night of darkness and difficulty the captain of a ship had cast the lead, fearful to find his ship was among the shoals, and that, after moments of terrible anxiety, the plummet had sounded twenty fathoms. Mr. Whitley had not saved the Government, but he had shown, or had seemed to show, that it was safe; that the confident predictions of the Opposition were baseless, and that, after six years of office, the great heart of the country still beat true to Lord Beaconsfield.

Just in proportion as his party were inclined to make too much of Mr. Whitley when he came back in triumph from Liverpool the first time, so were they prone to be a little unjust to him when he returned after the general election. Of course, no one ever said it in so many words, but there was not lacking an inclination to regard Mr. Whitley as the cause of the altered position of political parties. What did he mean by winning the election of February, 1880, with a majority that seemed to show that Conservatism was still predominant in the country? How could he regard without a blush the festivities of February, the hobnobbing with Cabinet Ministers, the introduction to all that was illustrious and fair in the inner circle of Conservatism? Disappointment is often unjust, and though Mr. Whitley, good man,

was precisely as harmless in February, 1881, as he was in February, 1880, his position in the House of Commons was greatly altered. He himself, withal a modest man, has assisted in hastening the completion in the change of his position by retiring into the background. No one was more surprised than he to find himself a great man in politics. Perhaps none more gladly returned to obscurity. Forgotten, unnoticed, or, when looked at, regarded as the origin of existing evil, Mr. Whitley sits under the grateful shadow of the gallery, thankful if people will only be good enough not to remember his existence, or to recall the brief spell of maddening excitement that disturbed the even tenor of a placid and blameless life.

The chief blocker. It is Mr. Warton who has once more lifted Mr. Whitley out of obscurity, and placed him on a pedestal on which he may not evermore escape the public gaze. Mr. Warton is a Tory pure and simple. He thinks that things were a great deal better thirty years ago, and better still fifty years ago, and he is determined, as far as he can control events, that to-morrow shall not be very much worse than to-day. The simple means at his disposal are to prevent further legislation. The Liberals are always hacking at the Constitution, perpetually bringing in Bills designed to alter some existing arrangement. Thanks to one of the most beneficent principles of the British Constitution which forbids opposed business to be taken in the House of Commons after half-past twelve, Mr. Warton is able to do a good deal in the way of checking this tendency. As the magic hour approaches you shall see him in a condition of growing excitement. His copy of the Orders is spread out on the seat to the left, annotated with any special reasons that may occur to him why particular Bills should not be proceeded with. On the ledge of the desk before him lies his snuff-box, whilst he in the excitement of the moment nervously snuffs at empty fingers. For greater readiness he sits on the extreme edge of the bench, prepared to jump up before a Speaker in league with Democracy shall thwart his patriotic endeavour by too swiftly advancing a measure. When the Bill is called on, Mr. Warton springs to his feet and utters the cabalistic words, "I object!" then resumes his seat in readiness for the next Bill.

"My friend and I." It was incidentally, in the course of discussion upon the Scotch Married Woman's Property Bill, that Mr. Whitley was once more brought into the prominence to which he has been so long a stranger. "My friend and I," said Mr. Warton, "will never permit this sort of thing." What this sort of thing might be was not of much importance. But who was the personage distinguished as Mr. Warton's friend? All eyes were turned in the direction where the snuff-box lies like the uprooted trunk of some mighty tree. There to the right of Mr. Warton sat the figure once so familiar, but alas! now so changed. Perhaps it was the smile that the House of Commons used to know—the ever-constant smile that did not mean anything particular except benevolence. But the smile has passed away with the Conservative majority, and Mr. Whitley, once the outward and visible sign of renewed hope and assured triumph, is reduced to the status of Mr. Warton's "friend," and passes the hour after midnight ticking off Bills that his leader shall block.

May 9. — Mr.  
Gladstone on  
Lord Beacons-  
field.

Mr. Gladstone was not in his place at half-past four, but arrived before questions were over. He looked decidedly better than when he was last in the House. He was dressed in the deepest mourning, with a white flower in his button-hole. Every seat on the floor of the House was occupied, members coming in late filling the galleries on either hand of the Speaker. There was a considerable attendance of peers, who were not drawn away by the knowledge that at five o'clock business in their own House commenced, and a ceremony analogous to that expected in the Commons was taking place.

At a quarter to six the Premier rose, and moved that the House resolve itself into Committee, as a preliminary to a proposal of a vote for a monument to Lord Beaconsfield. Turning to consider the personal qualities of the late Minister, Mr. Gladstone found in Mr. Pitt the only parallel in respect to the surprise, he might say the wonder, with which his career was regarded. There were in his character certain great qualities as extraordinary as his intellectual powers. These were his strong will, his long-sighted persistency of purpose, his remarkable power of self-government, and last, not least, his great Parlia-

mentary courage. Mr. Gladstone had known some score of Ministers, but never any two who were his equal in these respects. The Premier also signalled out Lord Beaconsfield's great sympathy with his race, for which he was always ready to risk his popularity. Not the less commendable was his sympathy and helpfulness towards men of letters, and the touching devotion to his wife, which had led to his foregoing the honour of a public funeral. Mr. Gladstone also wished to state in the House of Commons on this occasion that in all the judgments delivered by Lord Beaconsfield upon himself he never was actuated by sentiments of personal antipathy. He concluded by urging the House to accept, and accept in kindest spirit, the resolution for the erection of a monument in Westminster Abbey to the memory of the late earl.

Sir Stafford Northcote felicitously observed that whatever might be the result of the proposal now made there was already erected by the speech they had just heard a monument to Lord Beaconsfield better and more enduring than might be carved out of stone. Mr. Gladstone's speech was, he added amid general cheering, nobly expressed and nobly conceived. He disclaimed any intention or necessity for dealing with the political character of Lord Beaconsfield. "We are here," he said, "to place a wreath on the bier of a champion who has fallen amongst us."

The motion being put, Mr. Labouchere rose, and was received with cries of "Agreed, agreed," coming chiefly from the Liberal benches. Mr. Labouchere thought it was not surprising that Mr. Gladstone should allow generosity to outweigh all other feelings. For his own part he admitted that Lord Beaconsfield had great gifts, but he felt obliged to consider how they were applied. He did not think that the country had any reason to be grateful for anything Lord Beaconsfield had done. It was because it was impossible to separate the man from the Minister, the statesman from statesmanship, that he felt compelled to move the previous question.

The amendment was seconded, without remark, by Mr. Caine, and after some words from Mr. Arthur O'Connor, delivered amid the noise of much talking, the House divided, and the amendment was rejected by 380 votes against 54. On the proposal to put the main question, Mr. Biggar asked Mr. Gladstone whether, in view of "this large numerical minority,"

he intended to proceed with a resolution which, if it had any value, should be passed unanimously. Mr. Gladstone said he certainly did intend to press the motion. It was then put from the Chair, and, not being seriously challenged, was carried without a division.

May 13. — Mr. Tom Collins took his seat to-night, after challenged. an amusing scene. The Speaker giving the usual invitation to members desiring to take their seats to advance to the table, the newly elected member for Knaresborough briskly approached, outstripping his seconds, and arriving at the table some feet in advance of them. Here Sir Erskine May was standing with the copy of the oath. As Mr. Collins stretched out his hand to take it, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, closely following the precedent established by Sir Stafford Northcote in the case of Mr. Bradlaugh, rose to object, whereupon members opposite raised a constant shout of “Order, order!” interspersed with cheers and laughter, amid which Sir Wilfrid Lawson, soliciting a hearing waved a scroll held in his right hand. Mr. Collins, who appeared greatly to enjoy the excitement of the moment, went through the formula, signing his name with great celerity. Before taking up the pen he proposed to shake hands with the Attorney-General, but on second thoughts signed the book first, afterwards warmly grasping the hand of the hon. and learned gentleman, after which he shook hands with Mr. Childers, and was formally introduced to the Speaker, whom he smilingly greeted. Then making a *détour* of the Speaker’s chair, he reappeared below the gangway on the Conservative side, where he was an interested spectator of what followed.

The new member having been duly installed, curiosity as to what Sir Wilfrid Lawson might have to say predominated, and amid silence broken only by occasional peals of laughter or bursts of ironical cheering, Sir Wilfrid explained that he had risen to take the same course followed by Sir Stafford Northcote on the occasion of Mr. Bradlaugh’s presenting himself to take the oath. Mr. Ritchie rose to order on the point that there was no question before the House, to which Sir Wilfrid retorted that he would conclude with a motion. Sir Wilfrid complained that he had been interrupted by disorderly cries when he had risen to move a

resolution, and could only communicate now its terms to the House. They were to the effect that the House should appoint a Select Committee to ascertain the views of Mr. Tom Collins on the question of the sanctity of the oath.

The Speaker pointed out that Mr. Collins had presented himself to take the oath in accordance with the usual practice of the House, and that though he had been informed of the intention of Sir Wilfrid Lawson to interpose, he had thought it his duty not to permit any interruption. The cases of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Collins were essentially different, proceedings having been taken in consequence of Mr. Bradlaugh's own statement on which the question of his right to take the oath had been raised. Had he presented himself in the same way that Mr. Collins had done, the Speaker would not have permitted interference with his proposal to take the oath. Mr. Gladstone thought the distinction between the two cases was perfectly obvious, the action of the Speaker in the matter of Mr. Bradlaugh being taken on prior proceedings of the House which did not exist in the case of Mr. Collins. After a few words from Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and some humorous cries for Mr. Collins, the motion was withdrawn.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE IRISH LAND BILL.

Second Reading of the Land Bill—Mr. Parnell—Sir Stafford Northcote—Lord Hartington—An Irish Incursion—The Division—A Strange Scene—Mr. Gladstone in Harness—A Breach in the Liberal Ranks—A Lost Opportunity—in Committee of Supply—Mr. Dillwyn—Sir Andrew Lusk “wants to know”—Mr. Gladstone.

May 19.—Second reading of the Land Bill. In the first minutes of the morning Sir Stafford Northcote rose to bring within measurable distance the end of the debate on the second reading of the Irish Land Bill. All night long the war of words had gone on, after a fashion only too familiar. At six o'clock Mr. Chaplin had risen, and delivered an oration

worthy of the occasion. The hon. member had enjoyed full opportunity of preparing his periods. Three days earlier he had moved the adjournment of the debate, and so secured the first place at its resumption. Meanwhile, he had been buried in seclusion, laboriously cutting out and trying on sentences that should strike terror into the heart of an insolent Ministry, and, if but for the moment, lift up the soul of the downtrodden landlord. To this end Mr. Chaplin spent his nights and days with Mr. Disraeli, read many of his speeches, looked up all his perorations, and did long exercises in the way of writing them down from memory and attempting to recast three or four into quite a new one.

The labour was heavy, but the victory was great. Rarely has Mr. Chaplin appeared with so much satisfaction to himself. To the House perfect joy was marred by the continuous succession of shocks which it received as a consequence of the orator's peculiar method of preparation. He had taken in by the pores, as it were, so many perorations, that they were constantly bubbling up in unexpected places. When he drew himself together, raised his voice, and declaimed the rotund phrases, the House thought the end had come, and Mr. Warton took a pinch of snuff preparatory to cheering an orator who so eloquently expressed his own views. It was a little disappointing, even to the best disposed, to find Mr. Chaplin starting off again. Evidently a peroration more or less is of no consequence to this gifted man.

Mr. Parnell. By comparison with Mr. Chaplin's fervid eloquence and impressive manner, Mr. Parnell, when he spoke, appeared more than usually cold. The House, which had been nearly empty all night, even when all its corners were filled with Mr. Chaplin's periods, began to gather when Mr. Parnell was on his feet. To the listening Senate, Mr. Parnell, with graceful manner, softest voice, and elegantly cut sentences, explained how it was that, having for some years denounced successive Governments for not dealing with the Irish Land question, now, when Mr. Gladstone had boldly and honestly grappled with it, he should endeavour to hamper him by withdrawing the support of the gentlemen of independent mind who follow his lead. Nothing could be softer than Mr. Parnell's

speech, or more persuasive than his manner. He was sorry—really sorry—if the course he was about to take gave pain or inconvenience in any direction. But duty had always been Mr. Parnell's guiding star, and now it would lead him out of the House when the division bell rang.

*Sir Stafford Northcote.* Sir Stafford Northcote had a difficult task to perform. Mr. Chaplin had seized for himself the more attractive rôle. There is a scene in Corneille's "Horace" which Boileau was wont to rave about in an ecstasy of critical delight. Horace is lamenting the great disgrace he supposes has been brought upon him by the flight of his son in a combat with the Curiaces. "Que vouliez-vous qu'il fit contre trois?" Julie asks; and the old man passionately exclaims, "Qu'il mourût." The attitude of Horace was that assumed by Mr. Chaplin. "What can we do against so many?" Sir Stafford plaintively asks. "You can die!" Mr. Chaplin thunders forth. Accordingly Sir Stafford, whose great notion of leadership is to follow, submissively prepared for death. But the act, often so gratifying when performed by other people, was robbed of all its grace and attraction by Sir Stafford's halting manner. He had made up his mind to die by dashing recklessly on the enormous majority prepared to carry the second reading of the Land Bill. But instead of uttering a few heroic platitudes, he felt the necessity of explaining how it came about that he was going to do such an exceedingly foolish thing. This he accomplished in a speech which the House more or less listened to for three-quarters of an hour.

*Lord Hartington.* It was now a quarter to one, and Lord Hartington appearing at the table was received with prolonged cheering from the Ministerialists. This warm acclaim was due to several reasons. In the first place Lord Hartington is personally and deservedly a great favourite in all parts of the House. In the second place, his appearance to defend the Land Bill was a final answer to the gossip about his only half-hearted adhesion to the Cabinet scheme; and lastly, it seemed that now at last the end had come, and that only a few words from Lord Hartington interposed between the House and the conclusion of one of the weariest and most unprofitable debates recorded in

its history. Lord Hartington started off splendidly. He said very little about Mr. Chaplin's rhetoric, but he smartly riddled the position taken up both by the leader of the Conservative Opposition and the purse-bearer of the Land League. If he had stopped there all would have been well, but unhappily he fell into the weary round of criticism and defiance, and for half an hour flogged the dead horse.

An Irish incur-      Half-past one o'clock, and a fine morning ! Lord  
sion.      Hartington was down, and Mr. Callan and Mr. Marum springing to their feet, as if projected by machinery, confronted an infuriated House. The roar frightened Mr. Marum, who dropped into his seat limp and as nearly livid as nature will permit. But Mr. Callan is not a man to be moved by demonstrations of this kind. In contests with these particular agencies which influence the average member of Parliament, Mr. Callan is as impregnable as was the Cappadocian to usually successful attacks of quite another character.

A viper bit a Cappadocian's hide;  
The viper 'twas and not the man that died.

The rules and orders of the House of Commons were not designed in contemplation of the possibility of the admission of gentlemen like Mr. Callan. Some ill-disciplined members were not able to restrain their manifestations of vexation at this interposition at the close of a debate eight days long. But to them Mr. Callan frankly made answer that if they interrupted him he would move the adjournment of the debate. The House is entirely at the mercy of an individual in this matter, and so the most powerful assembly in the world perforce sat fuming and fretting whilst the member for Louth tortured it.

When Mr. Callan resumed his seat, a short, spare gentleman, well advanced in years, timidly rose from behind the front Opposition bench. The roar that had shaken the House when Mr. Callan presented himself was nothing compared with the piercing howls of indignation which filled the Chamber when it was discovered that Mr. Storer positively proposed to make a speech ! Like Mr. Marum, Mr. Storer was temporarily overwhelmed by the shock of the first onslaught. He dropped back into his seat;

but, urged on by evilly disposed members near him, he rose again, and with shaking limbs faced the hurricane. Then turning in the direction whence the storm came thickest, he shouted at it—that is, he was understood to be shouting, as his jaw moved with a regularity indicative of articulate speech. But whether he uttered a word or whether he was merely mocking his enemies with dumb show no man knoweth.

**The Division.** At last the Speaker was on his feet, the question put, and the House cleared for a division. The Irish members clustered below the gangway rose and left the House under the appropriate leadership of Mr. Healy, Mr. Parnell bringing up the rear, and smiling scornfully at the mocking laughter and ironical cheering with which this comedy was watched. A crowd of members gathered at the Bar. There were large gaps on the benches where the Opposition sit, notably below the gangway, whence the Irish members had but just departed. On the Treasury bench sat Mr. Gladstone, looking pale and infinitely wearied. He had been engaged during the past hour in an effort to write a long letter, the endeavour being hampered by the exciting scenes constantly breaking forth, and frequently frustrated by the interposition of Sir Charles Forster, who was wandering about the House looking for his hat, and could not be convinced that the Premier had not appropriated it. Now Sir Charles, having given up the active search, had planted himself just behind the Premier, and, leaning forward over his shoulder, was ready to pounce upon him if, in an unguarded moment, evidence of guilt were forthcoming.

Members streamed slowly out to the division, and trickled back, first in twos and threes, and then in a long stream that occasionally became dammed at the Bar. Mr. Gladstone was back in the first flight, and with a pen in his hand and the unfinished letter on his knee, sat looking anxiously towards the door whence the tellers for the "Ayes" would presently come. The tellers for the "Noes" had been in some moments, and every second's delay in the appearance of the other tellers showed how the majority was mounting up. At length Lord Kensington was discovered struggling through the dense crowd at the bar. He brought the number of "Ayes" and the paper being handed to Lord Richard Grosvenor, he read out the figures—

" For Lord Elcho's amendment, 176 ; against, 352 ! "

Cheer after cheer rose from the crowded benches at this unexpectedly large majority. There was no one to say " No " to the proposal for the second reading, and members streamed out into Palace Yard, excitedly discussing the result. It was a great stride out of the heated Chamber and the noisy discussion into the cool morning. In the south the crescent moon shone in a sea of azure blue. In the east the blue was paling into opal, and a few fleecy clouds were just touched with rose tint. Day was breaking over the sleeping city, and let us all hope that day was breaking for long unhappy Ireland.

May 27. — A strange scene. The heavens which bend all too low over London never beheld such a sight as they witnessed at six o'clock this afternoon, when the Prime Minister of England sat on the Treasury bench in the midst of an applauding Senate balancing on his head the hat of the Solicitor-General. Dr. Lyon Playfair, as he had reassuringly mentioned to Mr. Healy, had devoted a good deal of time to consideration of the amendments to Clause 1 on the Irish Land Bill. But he was not prepared for this. Ready for a bout with Mr. Biggar, unshrink ing from contest with Mr. Healy, with one eye on Lord Randolph Churchill, and the other on Mr. Warton, the Chairman of Committees, thus unexpectedly confronted, sat stock still, with gently parted lips and glassy eye, as he looked upon the Premier thus disporting himself. *Que fait-il dans ce chapeau-là?*

It is a long story in which tragedy combines with comedy. The Premier had been in his place since the House met, as he persists in being at all hours. On Thursday night he conducted the Budget Bill through committee, taking it up at the precise amendment where progress had been reported at half-past two on Tuesday morning, when, after a heated wrangle with Lord Randolph Churchill, he had gone home sick at heart and disappointed, because here was another obstacle to the speedy passage of the Land Bill. Having seen the Budget Bill safely through he permitted himself the rare luxury of dining out, though he could scarcely have sat through the full course of a modern dinner, since he was back in his place within the space of two hours, and sat with flushed face and eyes all too bright, watching and waiting till persevering mediocrity should have

spun itself out, and the hour strike when the real business of discussing the Irish Land Bill might commence.

Mr. Gladstone in harness. Why he should do this is an old inquiry for which few now look for a satisfactory answer. Some weeks ago, warned by recurrent sickness, he had begun to abjure late hours, and to intermit incessant watchfulness on the Treasury bench. At midnight he would steal away, leaving the House in charge of Lord Hartington. This was an arrangement desirable from more points of view than one. It not only secured rest for the over-worked Premier, but it directly contributed to the silent working of the machinery of the House. Mr. Gladstone, with all his transcendent genius, is not a good leader of the House of Commons. The business there being, after all, to work, he has a fatal propensity towards the prolongation of talk. He not only talks untimely himself, but is the cause of unnecessary talk in others. Any one entering the House would know without looking towards the Treasury bench whether Mr. Gladstone is in his place or not. It is a fresh tribute to his overmastering personality that when he is present the whole debate revolves round him. Members speak directly to or at him, in contravention of the elementary rule which requires all speech to be addressed to the Chair. This would not be, or certainly would not be to so great an extent, if Mr. Gladstone could affect insensibility or indifference. These are gifts lavishly bestowed upon mediocrity, but, in one case at least, are withheld from genius. Whoever may be the speaker, however absolutely unimportant are his remarks, Mr. Gladstone pricks up his ears and follows the speech with avid attention, and, by interjecting observations, often makes a conversation of what should be a debate.

All this is very bad for the business of the House. But it must be worse still for Mr. Gladstone. The pitcher that often goes to the well will be broken at last. Night after night the Premier needlessly risks fracture. It is impossible for him to half do anything. Being leader of the House, he must be in his place to lead, and being in his place he holds it to be his duty to concentrate his mind upon every trivial utterance that may fall from the lips of any member, however insignificant. If he could be forcibly kidnapped every night at half-past eleven,

taken home, and put to bed, though the procedure would be highly illegal, it would at the same time greatly add to length of years with him, and conduce to the speedier progress of the business he has at heart.

*A breach in the Liberal ranks.* Having been on the Treasury bench till half-past one yesterday morning, the Premier was down again at two in the afternoon, pale and wearied in look, but in spirit eager for the fray. The scene and the atmosphere of the place were well calculated to excite the spirit of the Parliamentary warrior. The languid unreality of the fight over the second reading of the Bill had disappeared. The House was now face to face with the actualities of the Land Bill and the realities of the campaign. Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice had moved to reconstruct the measure by putting the constitution of the court in the forefront. This, the first appearance of division on the Ministerial side, was eagerly welcomed by the Conservatives, who hastened to support the proposal. The benches were crowded—the air was full of electricity. It was a test division, that would show how many members there were who, secretly disliking the Bill, would gladly seize an opportunity of dealing a blow at it without appearing to be hostile to its principle.

At length the last word had been spoken, and the question was put from the Chair. "I think the 'Noes' have it," said Dr. Playfair. The responsive shout came back, "'Ayes' have it," and the order was given to clear the House. At the sound of the division bell members came trooping in, and stood in a dense crowd at the Bar. Mr. Gladstone, who had been following with customary feverish anxiety the speeches on both sides, suddenly sprang up from the recumbent attitude in which he had been sitting, and in a rapid, excitable manner, said a few words to the Solicitor-General. Then the astonished committee discovered him standing at the table, with evident intention to speak.

Such a thing was never known in Parliamentary history, and was plainly out of order. When the House has been cleared for a division a member may speak on a point of order connected with the division if he so desires, but in doing so must remain seated with his hat on. Yet here

was Mr. Gladstone, the bell for the division having rung, and members hurrying to and fro, standing at the table wanting to make a speech!

Mr. Gladstone seemed to have lost his head as well as to have forgotten his hat. He met the roar of contumely with a decisive shake of his head that seemed to say he had heard Tory clamour before, and was not going to be put down by it now. When the Chairman rose he resumed his seat, but was up again when Dr. Playfair was down, and once more thunderous and indignant shouts filled the Chamber. Mr. Gladstone had destroyed the Irish Church, and was even now engaged in further deliverance of the Irish land. These things had been fought against in vain. But he should not stand at the table and address the Chairman when the House had been cleared for a division.

“Put on your hat!” the Ministerialists cried.

Mr. Gladstone, who had now been half forced back into his seat, shrewdly shook his head. The old instincts of diplomacy were upon him. The fact was, he had not brought his hat with him into the House. But he would admit nothing in the presence of the enemy. His dilemma was presently discovered by his friends, and the air grew dark with hats as they were reached forward for his acceptance.

A lost oppor-  
tunity.

Sir Charles Forster sat on the back bench, moody and forlorn. Often he had pressed his attention on his right hon. friend. He had come and sat by him in moments of his greatest triumph, and at crises of profoundest anxiety. He had talked to him when he was writing letters, and had awakened him out of his sleep to offer some remarks on the state of the weather. These attentions had not always been well received. Now, if he only had his hat the Premier would learn how priceless is a friend. Sir Charles had been looking for his hat for twenty years, and had not found it. It was no use to start off now along the familiar hunting-ground, and, with a great pang, he saw the Solicitor-General take off his hat and place it on the Premier's head. But he had his revenge. The hat was at least two sizes too small, and momentarily threatened to fall off. But the Premier dexterously balanced it, and, amid uproarious cheers and laughter, addressed the

Commons of England, seated on the edge of the bench for the more perfect and dexterous balancing of a borrowed hat.

June 10.—In Committee of Supply. “Lo ! winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.” These words may have flashed across the memory of Mr. Gladstone as he sat on the Treasury bench to-day and on Thursday, and with pleased countenance noted the change which had suddenly come over the House. A continuance of it had worked no slight change on the Premier himself. He had come back on Thursday sad and weary, expecting a renewal of the struggle with spiteful verbosity. But when the clouds of amendments passed away, and members basked under the blue sky of committee, the countenance of the impressionable Premier began to clear. He got better as Thursday evening and many votes passed, and by yesterday had assumed quite a rakish look. Arrayed in a white waistcoat, with a new hat (his own) on his head, and with what looked like a home-made crutch stick in his gloved hand, he sat at the upper end of the Treasury bench. Let others toil through the long night. For them the task of wrestling with Lord Randolph Churchill, the duty of foiling the curiosity of Mr. Rylands, annually excited by the vote for secret service money. For Mr. Gladstone the ease of a seat at the far end of the Treasury bench outside the eddying smoke of battle. For him the subtle joy of wearing a hat slightly tilted on one side, and the easy grace of a stick lightly held by the middle in a gloved hand—one of those convenient gloves which he affects, in respect of which it does not matter whether you put the right one on the left hand, or the left one on the right. The fit and general appearance are much the same, and a good deal of trouble and forethought are spared. Presently the Premier rose, and with careless air sauntered out, probably making his way leisurely to the Park to lean on the railings and watch the gallant horsemen or the gay equipages.

Mr. Dillwyn. All this came about no one knows how. When the House met on Thursday it was amid anticipations of the gloomiest kind. There were eighteen notices of

motion on going into Committee of Supply, any two of which might be counted upon to occupy the whole of the sitting. But somehow or other they went off, and before eight o'clock the Speaker was released, and the Chairman of Committees reigned in his stead. Lo ! the questions are passed, the amendments are over and gone, Dr. Lyon Playfair appears at the table, the time of the putting of votes in supply is come, and the voice of Mr. Dillwyn is heard in the House. Mr. Dillwyn has sometimes given a little trouble to Ministers anxious to obtain votes. In times past he has, peradventure, been regarded as a nuisance. But just now, after the bitter experience of five months, the appearance of the member for Swansea, standing well out from the corner bench below the gangway, is as soothing to the eyes of Ministers as the sight of land to the weary mariner. They positively linger over the tones of his voice, and are discovered secretly pinching themselves to ascertain whether they are awake or whether this is a delirious dream, born of long suffering. It is like old times to hear Mr. Dillwyn thus, and to look round on the quiet Chamber with its score of occupants, each busy with the Votes, which he pores over pencil in hand. It seems years since we had anything like this. More familiar in recent memory is the spectacle of Mr. Parnell standing below the gangway on the side opposite to Mr. Dillwyn, leaning forward with the Votes opened on his left hand, whilst he beats time to his complaint with the other. Also there echoes through memory's chamber the harsh shrill notes of Mr. Biggar's "Hear, hear!" and in our mind's eye, Joseph Gillis, we see thee rise, and with long, lean hand outstretched beckon the Chairman and every one else to sit down whilst thou offerest a few remarks to the detriment of the Saxon.

Sir Andrew Lusk  
wants to know. Sir Andrew Lusk, irresistibly drawn by the long unwonted attractions of Committee of Supply, is in his place, and is "wanting to know" in the old familiar style. Sir Andrew always approaches Ministers on these occasions with the manner of the indulgent parent. He has not the slightest doubt that they have been sinning; but he is not a harsh man, and if they will only make a clean breast of it, he will see what can be done.

"Now education's a very good thing," Sir Andrew says,

being inclined to make general admissions, “and science and art, and all that you know; but about this £17,000 for a new building at South Kensington to keep spirits in. Now, I want to know what sort of spirits are they? Are they spirits from the vasty deep? Come now,” and so on, a pretty mixture of threat and entreaty with a fair admixture of jocularity and some suspicion of incoherency.

Few men are able to resist the force of Sir Andrew’s entreaty, and it generally happens when any clear idea is grasped of what it is he “wants to know,” his curiosity is gratified. Presently he is up again, “wanting to know” more than ever, but always with the same illimitable forgiveness, if only the culprits on the Treasury bench will make full confession.

June 13. — Mr. Gladstone was not in his place at half-past four, and came in half-an-hour later. I am sorry to say his looks suggested that if he had deferred his visit altogether it would have been better for him, and for those great interests bound up with the preservation of his health. The worst sign about him is not so much that he looks pale, and worn, and weary, but that he is in a condition of perpetual unrest. It always was a characteristic of his attendance upon his Parliamentary duties that he did not know how to sit still. This was a gift possessed in high degree by Lord Beaconsfield, and, doubtless, added many years to his life. In Parliamentary life, as we have already seen, Mr. Gladstone’s mind entirely lacks the quality of perspective. He is scarcely less interested and excited by what Mr. Chaplin may say than he is by the utterances of Sir Stafford Northcote. Fortunately, with respect to one or two members his mind has suffered a certain hardening process, by which he is able to follow the example of less gifted men, and sit and listen with perfect indifference to their chatter, often spiteful and frequently inane.

Mr. Warton is a person who frequently amuses the Premier —or, rather, he did amuse him earlier in the session. But having grown a little too constant in his unmannerly interruptions, the member for Bridport is coming to be regarded as an unmitigated bore. For Lord Randolph Churchill, too, the Premier always has an amused smile as that amiable young nobleman endeavours to stir up strife. Mr. Ashmead

Bartlett is another active opponent from whom the Premier is able to get a little wholesome laughter. But there are many others, less notorious by name, but equally unimportant in influence, whose speeches Mr. Gladstone follows with as eager attention as if they were really contributing argument to the debate. The effect of this is active and reactionary. The presence of the Premier, with his pale, eager face, often has a distinct effect in the direction of lengthening the debate, members on the opposite side endeavour for various reasons to "draw" him. It gratifies their vanity to make it appear that what they have said is so important that Mr. Gladstone must needs reply. Failing this, they have the satisfaction of worrying him. It is curious to notice how, in debates on the Land Bill, if Mr. Gladstone is in his place, all speakers on the opposite benches address themselves personally to him. The discussion becomes a conversation, for often, alas! Mr. Gladstone is induced, when a member makes a misrepresentation patent to the House, and therefore harmless, to shake his head or interject a contradiction; whereupon the Conservatives uproariously applaud the statement or shout the Premier down.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### CANDIDATES FOR THE CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP.

New Leaders for the Conservative Party—What is a Whig?—A young Whig—A Coalition—Divided Counsels—The Banner of Mr. Biggar and Mr. Healy—The Duke of Albany Sworn in—Mr. Christopher Sykes—Strange People—"Bobby"—Patronising a Big Brother—An Outrage—Two Irish Members: New Style—Mr. T. P. O'Connor—Mr. Healy—An old Member back again—Youth and Age—Changed Circumstances—The Fascination of Mr. Biggar—Living in the Past.

June 17. — New leaders for the Conservative party.

If the spirits of former leaders of the House of Commons revisit the scene of their earthly labours, what a commotion there must have been in the upper regions as Pitt and Canning, Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Disraeli, looked down upon the great Conservative Party ranging themselves under the banner of Mr. Healy, and

walking out to the divison lobby, keeping step to the long strides of Mr. Biggar! It came to pass in the first hour of this morning, at the close of a lengthy, occasionally tumultuous, sitting. All night long the House had wrestled with amendments to the Irish Land Bill. An hour earlier there had been a break in the cloud which has so long lain low over the Conservative Benches. There had really been something like a split in the Ministerial camp. Keen and wistful eyes had at last discovered the rift in the lute, which, widening, should presently make mute the music of the Ministerial majority. The hand long-held out from the Opposition had at length been grasped. The Whigs—those uncertain compounds of slow-moving impulse, *entrées* in the feast of politics which are neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red-herring—had stirred, and the atmosphere was tremulous with excitement and doubt.

What is a Whig? In these days no one ever quite knows what is a Whig, or who. For whole sessions a man may go through life voting with his party and saying nothing. Suddenly a crisis arrives, when it turns out that all the while the man was a Whig. No one, for example, would have suspected that Mr. Ramsay was a Whig, though truly in the calm, intellectual countenance of the member for Falkirk there are unfathomed deeps that may hide anything. Originally of active intelligence and searching mind, Mr. Ramsay is always being cast back into the profoundest depths of meditation by sudden contact with what frivolous people call “a joke.” Life would, he admits, be endurable but for its jokes. Why should people talk in twisted phrase, and call a spade anything but what it is? A joke or a so-called flash of humour is to Mr. Ramsay what a pair of boots would be to a man born in the planet where people have no legs. He does not know what it is for, or with what useful object it has been invented. But circumstances compelling him to spend much of his life out of Scotland, he is constantly being puzzled by seeing people laugh at something somebody has said, and life takes on an added seriousness as he gropes in search of the meaning of it. Thus Mr. Ramsay, moving slowly, has only late in life reached the point of political education at which a man is classed as a Whig.

**A young Whig.** Of quite another type is the member for Stroud. Mr. Brand has the serious introspective air which marks the Whig when under forty. You see it in Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice and in Mr. Cartwright. But neither of these gentlemen has quite the air of authority which distinguishes Mr. Brand and extinguishes the Speaker. There is one pleasing peculiarity about the Whig as we know in these days. The Radical is "cock sure," and so is the Tory, whereas the Whig is argumentative. He feels the responsibility which rests upon him. Tory and Liberal fight for place or power, and, sometimes, for principle. The Whig has for thought only his country. A sort of Atlas, he laboriously picks his way through life, bearing on his shoulders the weight of his native land. This condition prevents him from being "cock sure." But to a young gentlemen of Mr. Brand's profound research, quick insight, and great gifts of speech, the aggregate weight of Great Britain and Ireland are as a mere knapsack. He can carry them under one arm, whilst with the other he gracefully points his periods. But this is only an addition to the ordinary substratum of Whig nature. It is an addition from the wealth of Mr. Brand's nature, and underneath these lies, as with all the Whigs, that serious, argumentative, unemotional, prophetic manner which is born with a man and cannot be acquired. It is in the blood at the birth, and breaks out sooner or later. In Mr. Ramsay late in life, in Mr. Brand in his earliest years.

**A coalition.** On Thursday night the Whigs had moved, and the Conservatives with a welcome shout marched forward to join their forces. It was rather an anxious moment on the Treasury bench. The majority was assured, but by how many? It is always difficult for a majority, especially an overwhelming majority, to show up well in a division in committee. No one knows exactly at what time the division may be taken. Some are not quite clear what the division is about, and are tired of having "whips" thrice underlined commanding their attendance at critical trials of strength which sometimes do not come off. In this case there were gaps plainly seen on the Ministerial benches. It was known that twenty or thirty Whigs would go the length of voting against Ministers, and there were angry whispers going about of men who had paired for the dinner hour

and were running it on to midnight. The crowd streaming in from the doorway under the clock continued to put forth its supplies man for man with the throng coming in from behind the Speaker's chair. Members rushing in with first information of the figures flashed it along the benches where sat excited members eager to hear. It was clear that the Ministry would be run very close; and when Lord Richard Grosvenor, in tones that lacked their usual triumph, announced that 220 had voted for Mr. Heneage's amendment and 225 against no wonder that a thunderous cheer rose from the Opposition benches, echoing through the distant corridors, and causing to turn pale guilty Ministerialists arriving in hot haste from club or dinner party and finding themselves too late.

It was this partial grasp of victory that excited hon. gentlemen on the benches opposite. They at a time when further fighting seemed hopeless had almost snatched a triumph and were eager for further fray.

*Divided counsels.* On the motion that the first clause be added to the Bill, Sir Stafford Northcote and the titular leaders of the Conservative party took a course consecrated by long precedence. The best and most usual thing to be done would have been to permit the clause to have been added without controversy. Committee had long fought over it, and the minority had been repeatedly beaten. To force a further division was a pure waste of time, and was contrary to both the spirit and the practice of debate. Taking this view when Mr. Healy challenged a division Sir Stafford Northcote and nearly all his colleagues in the late Administration walked out of the House. Should the party follow their leaders, or should they remain and fight on, an undisciplined force. Not quite without a leader, for here was Mr. Healy with his sword drawn, ready to lead them in this forlorn hope. Nor was their new captain without a lieutenant. Mr. Biggar had volunteered to "tell" with him, and the two gentlemen sat below the gangway waiting till noble lords and hon. gentlemen above had made up their minds. The mental struggle was evidently a bitter one. Many rose, apparently without hesitation, and fell in behind the melancholy procession led by Sir Stafford Northcote, who filed out behind the Speaker's chair, and left the

first clause of the Land Bill to its fate. Others remained seated till the last had gone, glancing wistfully towards the doorway and then at the corner seat below the gangway where Mr. Healy was endeavouring to look unconcerned. Just below him was Mr. Biggar, with a pleased smile on his expressive countenance as he watched the dilemma of gentlemen who have from time to time audibly expressed displeasure upon his rising to take part in debate. In many cases it was clear that this last look in the direction of the seats below the gangway sufficed, and several members whose hostility to the Land Bill is unquestioned hastily rose and fled.

The banner of  
Mr. Biggar and  
Mr. Healy.

But there remained, with teeth set and eyes steadily fixed, one or two members, round whom the others gratefully rallied. It could not have been a pleasant thing for Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to dissociate himself from his colleagues in the late Ministry, still less to follow in the train of Mr. Healy and Mr. Biggar. But, balancing various dislikes, his hatred of the Land Bill prevailed, and he sat with folded arms at the remote end of the first bench, miserable but immovable. Sir Walter Barttelot made up his mind to stop, so did Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Egerton, Mr. Yorke, and Mr. Balfour. Lord Randolph Churchill also remained, though it is no new thing for him to act with the party of Mr. Parnell with the common object of flouting the Government.

Slowly the sand in the hour-glass ran out. The last grain had dropped, the doors were locked, the question was put, and the die was cast. Sir Stafford Northcote having abdicated his position as leader of the Conservative party, Mr. Healy reigned in his stead. In a famous passage Mr. Disraeli has described the memorable division when Sir Robert Peel sat on the Treasury bench and beheld "passing in defile to the hostile lobby the flower of that great party who had been so proud to follow one who had been so proud to lead." That was pretty picturesque. But it palls beside the picture witnessed in the first hour of yesterday morning, when the Balfours, the Barttelots, the Beaches, the Brodricks, the Chaplins, the Churchills, the Egertons, the Percys, and the Yorkes, not to mention the Fowlers, the Gorsts, the Wartons, and the Makinses, ranged themselves under the banner of Mr. Biggar and Mr. Healy.

June 21. — The Duke of Albany sworn in.

In the House of Lords Prince Leopold took the oath and his seat as Duke of Albany. The new peer arrived a few minutes after four o'clock, and formed part of a procession led by Black Rod, behind whom came in due order Garter King at Arms, the Earl Marshal, the Lord Great Chamberlain, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Cambridge. The Lord Chancellor was on the woolsack, wearing his cocked hat. The procession advanced to the woolsack, and greeted the Lord Chancellor, to whom the Duke of Albany delivered his patent of peerage, a roll of considerable length. The three Royal Princes took up their position by the table at the Opposition side, Black Rod, Garter King at Arms, the Earl Marshal, and the Lord Great Chamberlain being ranged on the other side. The Reading Clerk having recited the terms of the patent the oath was handed to the new peer, who took it in due form, and then signed the roll of Parliament.

Garter King at Arms again took charge of the business of procedure, and, reforming the procession, led the duke up to the steps of the throne, from before which the rails had been moved. Here a new chair was set, to which the Royal duke was conducted. He sat in it for a moment, the Prince of Wales standing on one side and the Duke of Cambridge on the other. Then rising, he and the two Royal princes quitted the House, the whole proceedings not having occupied many minutes, the larger share of which was taken up by the reading of the patent. Earl Granville and Earl Spencer were on the Ministerial bench, some forty peers being seated in other parts of the Chamber. There was a considerable gathering of ladies in the galleries, not only those round the House but behind the press gallery where strangers of the other sex usually sit. From the gallery to the left of the throne the Princess of Wales, the two Princesses her daughters, the Princess Mary of Cambridge, and the Princess Louise looked down upon the scene.

July 1. — Mr. Christopher Sykes.

If so humble a coin might be mentioned in this connection, it may be said that a penny would be cheerfully forthcoming for Mr. Sykes's thoughts as he sits under the gallery, watching what is to him so strange and unaccountable an assemblage. Among the minor drawbacks of his Parliamentary position is the fact that he should

chance to have been returned for a division of Yorkshire. There is no county in England which has so many divisions. It is quite a bore to a man, more especially in the middle of the season, to have to remember which division it is he represents. Whichever it be, Mr. Sykes really cannot face the problem on this disagreeably hot night. He is indebted to it for opportunity of occasionally, say five times a month, looking down upon this new, strange world where men labour for other ends than to provide a good dinner for Royal Princes, and sigh for meaner ambitions than that of entertaining their Sovereign. From the safe solitude of the gallery or the dim recesses behind the chair of the Sergeant-at-Arms Mr. Sykes looks on with that ineffable and indescribable expression of apprehensive curiosity which is so familiar to his friends. He likes to steal away for a while from his worthier world, and come hither to look on these new scenes, just as *nous autres* sometimes go to the Zoological Gardens and stare in at the cages where the lions expend so much useless energy, or at the monkey-house, with its busy population. We wonder what they are thinking of, if they think at all; what impulse prompts them, and, above all, what they will do next.

Strange people. This last is the apprehension that tempers the pleasure of the brief surcease from boredom which Mr. Sykes finds in his occasional visits to the House. Hon. members make uncouth noises; they roar with vulgar laughter; they shout like costermongers, and every one seems to work so hard! But all this is their affair, incomprehensible to Mr. Sykes, as much in the Zoological Gardens goes beyond our power of understanding. It is their way, and they cannot help it. Mr. Sykes is too much a man of the world to complain on this score, or to suppose it reasonable that the House of Commons should, because he is present, display more repose of manner. If they would it would be well; but the thing is not insisted upon. What Mr. Sykes shudderingly apprehends is the tendency of people to speak to him. Very few presume. But who can say what may happen, especially after dinner, in an assemblage where one man is as good as another, where Lord Folkestone "chums" with Mr. Warton, and the flower of the Tory gentry have walked out to vote under the joint leadership of Mr. Healy and Mr. Biggar?

"Bobby." Once it did happen. It was two months ago, and for five weeks Mr. Sykes was not seen in the House. It was youth that thus outraged the first principles of an Englishman's birthright—youth elated with dinner, and its spirits abnormally raised by the discovery that it could wear a collar the eighth of an inch higher than any it had yet attempted. It was in the first days of May, when soft airs rustled among the new-born leaves in the Park, and whispered to each other their joyful surprise at finding the world so fair. Mr. Sykes entered at eleven o'clock, and, standing for a moment at the doorway, surveyed the House in search of a quiet corner where he might sit with the greatest possible distance between himself and his fellow men. Discovering that the gallery to the left of the Speaker was empty, he approached it by a lonely and circuitous route, and, getting well up into the corner of the second seat so that no one could possibly approach him from the right, he gave himself up to the study of this ever fresh problem. But he had been observed. Young Spencer is always standing up in the stalls, as it were, and glancing round to note friends in the boxes. Nothing delights "Bobby" so much as to discover his noble relation, the President of the Council, in the gallery over the clock. Straightway he dashes for him, and by the grave face of the Earl, who knows so much about Ireland, are displayed the dazzling glories of the laundress, which shed a starchy halo about the form of his young brother.

Patronising a big brother. The youth whom the electors of North Northamptonshire delight to honour is something to be thankful for amid the harsh cares and worries of the House of Commons. He is so young, so lighthearted, so glad he is alive and a member of Parliament, that we on the further side of fifty renew our youth in his. For himself it is a special delight to sit up in the gallery beside Earl Spencer, with his elbows resting on the rail. There is no position possible in which he could display to such advantage his incomparable shirt-front, his inapproachable cuffs, and his miraculous collar. But beyond material joys is the pure delight of patronising his big brother. Time was when the Earl ran down to see him at Harrow, told him to be a good boy, mind his lessons, and not

squander in toffy the sovereign wherewith he tipped him. But the whirligig of time brings its revenges. Now his big brother visiting the House of Commons is in a very minor and subordinate position. The member for Northamptonshire can, and does, wear his hat, whereas if Earl Spencer were to venture to put on his hat in the presence of the Speaker he would instantly be led forth to the block on Tower Hill and have his hat removed without the preliminary of taking out his head. The Earl knows this and feels it, though he tries not to notice the side-long glances which the lad casts at him, as, with his hat set with jaunty grace a little on one side he eyes the poor brother who is obliged to sit bare-headed. Moreover, he can, and presently does, walk up the floor of the House and sit on one of the benches, whence if he pleased and had anything to say (which it appears he has not) he might rise and address the Speaker. All of which this mighty brother, who in former years may have presumed on his position, cannot and dare not do.

*An outrage.* On this particular May evening the youth, light-hearted and content, had noted the arrival of Mr. Sykes in the gallery immediately opposite, and thought he would go and have a chat with him. He approached with easy and confident step, and sitting down beside him offered some remark. Mr. Sykes was for the moment stunned. He had not spoken himself; he had not noticed the youth when he came and sat beside him, though conscious of the presence of a Person. At sound of his voice he started, and turned upon him a troubled, questioning glance. Then, as a hind, suddenly started in some lone forest glade, turns and bounds away, so Mr. Sykes literally leaped over the bench immediately before him, and burying his chin in his arms, folded over the rail of the gallery, continued his study of the incomprehensible forms of human life below. The member for Northamptonshire sat awhile in silent amazement, then turned, and walked slowly away, his young spirits momentarily crushed by this remarkable reception of a friendly overture.

To-night Mr. Sykes was more puzzled than ever with the House of Commons. It was hot, even to sultriness. Yet, here were at least 300 gentlemen apparently in earnest conversation over something. What it might be passed the comprehension

of other minds besides that which Mr. Sykes brought to bear upon the unravelment of the puzzle. At nine o'clock Mr. Parnell had proposed an amendment. It was now midnight, and in the meantime so many speeches had been made and so many amendments moved to the proposed amendment that what might be the precise question before the Committee none could say. The Chairman, with an impartiality creditable to his office, took the greatest pains not to omit any aspect of it. On putting the question, whatever it might be, he declared the "Ayes" had it. The House having been cleared and the division imminent, he declared that the "Noes" had it. Finally he mixed up the tellers, assigning Lord Richard Grosvenor and Lord Kensington to marshal the Parnellites, and naming Mr. Richard Power and Mr. Justin McCarthy to tell for the Ministerialists. This was a well-meant effort. But it only further complicated affairs, and when the division was over, and members had given up the hopeless task of ascertaining what they had voted for or against the flood of talk began again. Mr. Gorst being put up by Lord Randolph Churchill to assail Mr. Gladstone was instantly knocked down by the right hon. gentleman, much as if he were the pantaloon of the merry little party below the gangway. Mr. Sykes thought his apology was quite gentlemanly. Also he was pleased with the courtliness of Mr. Chaplin, who announced his intention to "bow entirely" to the ruling of the Chairman. It was at this time that Mr. Chaplin, like Mr. Silas Wegg, "dropped into poetry," and Mr. Sykes felt an unwonted moisture gather in his eyes as the eloquent member for Mid-Lincolnshire exclaimed, in words which sounded like verse:—

You take away the landlord's rights,  
It may be for a long time,  
It may be for ever!

But what he could not understand was the curious way in which Lord Randolph Churchill displayed his anxiety for the progress of the Land Bill. "We all want the Bill to pass as soon as possible," Lord Randolph said, as he wrangled with the Solicitor-General about a nominative, and insisted upon discussing everything but the question before the Committee. This problem also was too exhaustive for a hot July night, and Mr. Sykes went home marvelling more than ever at the House of Commons.

July 15. — Two  
Irish members  
—New style.

Since 1874 the House of Commons has seen many varieties of Irish members; but in some respects Mr. T. P. O'Connor stands unrivalled.

If at the time that Charles Lever was writing it had been the fashion for obscure Irishmen to wake some morning and find themselves members of Parliament, the novelist would surely have returned Con Cregan for Galway. The fact is (as one remembers to have heard somewhere) that truth is stranger than fiction, and the electors of Galway, or rather Mr. Parnell, taking up the work of Mr. Lever, have found a seat in the House for Con Cregan. When he first presented himself, an assembly which is always generous and chivalrous was inclined to extend much favour to him. He was young, seemed ingenuous, and had at the outset the great good fortune to be attacked by Mr. Callan. In this position the native talent of an Irishman stood him in good stead. Being attacked, he replied with spirit and effect; but this early success was the ruin of him. Discovering fatal facility of speech, he was constantly on his legs, and gave the House full opportunities of discovering the barrenness of the land, and feeling the sting of the nettles with which it is overrun.

Mr. T.P. O'Connor. When Mr. Healy made his appearance in the House it was said his introduction was due to a rare pleasantry on the part of Mr. Parnell. Honourable gentlemen had fallen into the habit of thinking that it was impossible for a country of the geographical area of Ireland to produce a less acceptable member of Parliament than Mr. Biggar. Mr. Healy was elected, and the House quickly discovered that it had too hastily generalised. But Mr. Healy's laurels begin to wither, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor now proudly wears the crown of being absolutely the most insupportable of the Irish members. The two members, who recently ran neck and neck in this delectable race, are originally of the same class, and supply interesting study of development. Both bring on to the floor of the House of Commons the manners and the habits of thought of the Irish peasant; but Mr. T. P. O'Connor has over his countrymen the advantage or disadvantage of having been longer out of Ireland. He is veneered with a thin polish of London manners, and if he had time to spare from affairs of State, would make the friends of his early youth stare with stories of

what ye should eat and what ye should drink, and wherewithal ye should be clothed in rooms where London society gathers. Mr. Healy is better than Mr. T. P. O'Connor by this difference. No one can say what another season may bring forth, but up to now the human eye has not fallen upon Mr. Healy arrayed in evening dress on the model of Lord Randolph Churchill. That may come in time.

Mr. Healy. In the meanwhile Mr. Healy, with all his unprepossessing peculiarities, impresses the House with a notion of his sincerity. He really does believe, as Mr. Biggar does, all the things he utters to the despite of the Saxon. Moreover, he has of late cultivated a pretty talent for satire. When he entered the House members discovered below the gangway an ill-dressed man with sullen manner, who audibly gnashed his teeth at the Mace, and did not think it necessary to take his hands out of his pockets when addressing the Speaker. That was a mistake which Mr. Healy had sufficient intelligence to discover, and sufficient good sense to amend. He is still as implacable in his opposition to all that is Saxon as when he entered the House, but he has greatly improved in speaking, and the House begins to recognise in him sterling abilities. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, on the contrary, has gone from bad to worse. Having nothing useful to say, he bullies the House of Commons as if it were a landlord taken at disadvantage behind a hedge. In arranging degrees of comparison in the House of Commons, it has come to pass that Mr. Biggar is positive, Mr. Healy comparative, and Mr. T. P. O'Connor superlative. It probably suits their object to be thus regarded. But, alas! for the nation of brave men and fair women, of graceful wit, and heaven-born genius, represented on the most prominent stage of Europe by men like these.

July 15.—An old member back again. Nothing more strikingly marks the progress in manners achieved by the present House of Commons than the position held in it by Mr. Tom Collins. An unhappy fate removed for a time this great man from political life. The Parliament of 1874 knew him no more. His name was but a tradition, and the fame of his umbrella was eclipsed by the distinction gained by the late

Dr. Kenealy for his when he hooked it on the Mace what time he signed the roll of Parliament. But though Mr. Tom Collins was not in the last Parliament, the memory of his daring deeds was often recalled in smoking-room conversation. New members listened with profound interest to stories of his wild career, and heard with bated breath how, with those twin Romans, Mr. Cavendish Bentinck and Mr. James Lowther, he kept the Tiber bridge against the Tuscan host. When the present Parliament was elected, and it was known that Mr. James Lowther had lost his seat, the fact of Mr. Tom Collins finding one a little later seemed a special providence. It was felt that no single Parliament in these degenerate times could stand the combined energy of the lamented Mr. Lowther and the mercurial Mr. Collins, with such assistance as was to be derived from Mr. Cavendish Bentinek. Not without apprehension did members behold the new member for Knaresboro' approach the table to be sworn, and marvelled at the temerity of Sir Wilfrid Lawson, who ventured to break a joke upon him as he crossed the threshold of the House.

*Youth and age.* Mr. Collins has now been seated for some weeks, and is recognised on all hands as one of the most decorous, docile, and uninteresting personages in the House. Before dinner he still preserves that marvellous look of juvenility which, as he skips up the staircase in company with his umbrella, intent upon lodging his venerable companion in a safe corner of the cloak room, suggests that they would make an appropriate vignette to illustrate Mr. Coleridge's beautiful poem, "Youth and Age." This is in a large degree due to sartorial art. Mr. Tom Collins shares with Mr. Gellibrand Hubbard possession of the secret that a short-tailed morning coat is a leveller of age. It is when he is dressed for dinner that the truth manifests itself, and the hitherto unsuspecting new member begins to feel that Mr. Tom Collins was not born yesterday. But whether in morning or evening dress, the member for Knaresboro' preserves the perplexing appearance and behaviour of a sedate member of a cathedral city. No one to look at him, or to listen to him, would think that he had heard the Parliamentary chimes at midnight, or that he is even on terms of bowing acquaintance with Mr. Cavendish Bentinck.

Indeed, the two friends of an earlier epoch appear at special pains not to come into too close contact. The one has taken up his old quarters below the gangway, where he sits wrapped in memories of many cheerful nights now dead a dozen years. Mr. Cavendish Bentinck, scorning the barren honours of the front Opposition bench, sits sometimes in the rear of it, attracted by the choice companionship of Mr. Warton, and occasionally on the back benches below the gangway, where he can exchange a word with Mr. Newdegate, or, himself unobserved, can steal long glances at the profile of Mr. Biggar. No one can say what might happen if the two came together on the old bench, and with the old enemy as heretofore in supreme power on the Treasury bench. Steel and flint are better kept asunder if there be no desire to strike fire. So Mr. Cavendish Bentinck sits under the shadow of the gallery and surreptitiously cries "Hear, hear!" when any one calls in question the conduct of Mr. Gladstone, whilst Mr. Tom Collins mournfully muses in his old quarters, where new members stare at him, and wonder if this quiet, somewhat dried-up looking gentleman in evening dress two decades old can be the Count Collins, the whisper of whose name was sufficient to pale the cheek of members having the first place on Tuesday and Friday nights after a morning sitting.\*

Changed circumstances. The meaning of this apparent transmogrification is unquestionable, and it would be idle to gloss it over or attempt to explain it away. Mr. Tom Collins, like his umbrella and his wardrobe, is eight years older than when he last sat in Parliament. But he, and they, are exactly the same. What is changed is the House of Commons, and with it its standard of judgment of personal conduct. Mr. Tom Collins is, in a limited sense, a Parliamentary Rip Van Winkle. He has been asleep for seven years, and the world has stood still with him. But elsewhere, and more particularly in the House of Commons, it has been revolving at full speed, and when the spell is broken, and the sleeper, awakening, comes back to the familiar haunts expecting to find them and their habitats as they were when he closed his eyes, lo! everything but the scene

\* Mr. Collins in former Parliaments earned great renown by his success in counting out the House. Hence his *nom de guerre*, "Count Collins."

is changed. Here are the familiar walls, the green benches, the glass roof, the Speaker in the Chair, and the Mace on the table, with the old familiar jargon of question, and motion, and amendment, and hon. member, and noble lord, and right hon. friend. These familiar things make all the stranger the new order created during the seven years' sleep. There were Irish members in the Parliament of 1868. But this new brood—whom, by a felicitous slip of the tongue, Mr. Parnell to-night, meaning to say "my hon. friends," described as "my hon. members"—is something new to the musing mind of the member for Knaresboro'. The Healys, the T. P. O'Connors, and the Biggars are creations of a later date, and of a new combination of circumstances.

The fascination  
of Mr. Biggar.

Mr. Collins, coming back to the House in 1881, is literally in the position of the king who arose in Egypt and knew not Joseph. Yet of all the motley company that have come from Ireland to Westminster in partial fulfilment of Curran's prophetic threat at the time of the Union, there is none in whom he takes such a curious interest as in the member for Cavan. Joseph Gillis Biggar has a fascination for him which he in vain attempts to shake off. There is something pathetic in the manner in which he watches him when, at a few minutes to nine, the House is about to assemble after morning sittings. Old memories of comparative youth and of buoyant spirits rush back on his mind as he gazes on Mr. Biggar passing to and fro with long strides reconnoitring in the reading room or the library or on the terrace. He knows with the instinct of an old trapper what is in the capacious mind of the member for Cavan. He is counting the members on the premises, and seeing what chance there is for a successful movement the moment the Speaker takes the Chair. Mr. Collins would scorn to circumvent the new practitioner in the old familiar field. He might, if he pleased, reasonably claim an older right, a vested interest. But he is too broken in spirit, too bewildered by the conflict of old associations and new influences to take such a step. So he follows Mr. Biggar to and fro, watching him with that kind of pathetic interest with which Old Scrooge, being in spirit land, watched the ghost of his former self going about his accustomed work.

Living in the past. Cut off from this placid enjoyment of counting the House out, with Mr. James Lowther unseated, and Mr. Cavendish Bentinck above the gangway, Mr. Tom Collins lives largely in the past. He cannot, at his age, and with his standing, bend his neck to the yoke of Lord Randolph Churchill. He has himself, reclining in the very seat now usurped by the lordling from Woodstock, been a member of a Parliamentary combination which, though it had no name, was not less active than the Fourth Party. But in that happy community all were equals. There was no hectoring on the part of a self-elected chief, no insistence on personal suit and service in the way of fetching glasses of water and keeping the corner seat till the captain comes, when you are expected instantly to resign it. If the past could be brought back, Mr. Tom Collins would gladly reach out both arms to welcome it. But the past is irreversibly gone, and among the hard and angry realities of the present he mournfully sits, himself unchanged, but everything about him new and harsh and cold.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LAND BILL THROUGH COMMITTEE.

At last!—Sir William Palliser—The Speech—Mr. Gladstone explodes—Mr. Bradlaugh “chucked out”—Mr. “Toots” MacIver—Lord Denman—Lord Stratheden and Campbell—A Stranger in the House—Business in the Lords—How Lord Redesdale conducts it—Deference to the Chairman—Sad Memories—Obdurate—Triumphant—The O’Gorman Mahon on the Lords’ Amendment to the Land Bill—A Brother Veteran.

July 23.—At last! At half-past one o’clock this morning Mr. Gladstone shut up his papers, pulled down his cuffs, tugged violently at the back of his coat, and walked out of the House amid loud cheering from the Ministerialists. The Land Bill after thirty-three days’ fight was through Committee at last. It was a proud moment in a long and illustrious life—a fresh triumph in a victorious career. Yet so curiously do light and shadow intermingle in this life that the cup of the Premier’s joy

was dashed with a bitter flavour. He was the victim of those social amenities which he, as a rule, daringly disregards. He had knelt at the altar of fashion, and the great goddess had bestowed upon the unaccustomed votary a cruel gift. In plain language, the Premier, dining with the Prince of Wales, had for the occasion submitted to be inducted into a new coat, and felt as uncomfortable as David did when he donned the unaccustomed armour. If people did not think so much about these trifles, Mr. Gladstone would gladly have carried the institution a step further, and taken off his coat, as David cast off his armour; but, on reflection, he thought he had gone far enough in the direction of sartorial surprises. To sit on the Treasury bench balancing on his brow a hat six sizes too small was sufficient for one session. His subsequent appearance at the table in his shirt sleeves, whilst personally agreeable and admirably adapted to the work in hand, might have led to remark. So the Premier kept the garment on, and wrestled with it as if it were a new clause in the Land Bill proposed by Mr. Chaplin. He tugged at the sleeves, clutched at the collar, and made frantic efforts to achieve impossible things in the direction of fingering the seam between his shoulders. It was well in the circumstances Sir Stafford Northcote was out of the way, or that, having arrived somewhat late, he meekly took his place on the front bench, and attempted to look as if he were not there. At a single word the Premier would have bounded upon him, taken him up, shaken him, and flung him on one side. But Sir Stafford had gone through this process on Thursday night, and was not inclined for a repetition. So with hands meekly folded up his sleeves and knees tightly held together, he sat quiescent.

**Sir Wm. Palliser.** Disappointed in this quarter, and being utterly baffled in his attempt to get at the seam at the back of his coat, Sir William Palliser providentially came in the Premier's way and furnished food for his volcanic indignation. Sir William is a gentleman who, after having done the State some service in other walks of life, comes somewhat late into politics. He has invented something distinguished in the gunnery line, and to the partially informed mind his Parliamentary appearances suggest that it must have had something to do with

the long bore. Sir William is the kind of man, excellent in his way, thoroughly well informed on some subjects, who comes down with reams of notes, and proposes to deliver a convincing essay at an inconvenient moment.

Whilst the Land Bill was still young, and the withers of the Committee were unwrung, he had evolved a new clause. Undoubtedly if he had found an opportunity of moving his clause and making his speech two months ago, he would at least have had a fair measure of time allotted to him, and somebody besides himself might have had a glimmer of idea as to what the clause was about. His mistake was the inability to sacrifice his speech in the presence of an assembly that would not hear it read from notes neatly written out on both sides of a five-quire packet of note-paper.

The speech. When first produced, there was a movement of curiosity, it being thought that the packet was one of the famous projectiles. But when its real nature was recognised a groan of despair rent the air. Of the two the Committee would probably have preferred to have a Palliser projectile discharged in their midst rather than the Palliser oration. There is always, even with the most scientific gunnery, some doubt as to where the projectile may go or whom it may hit. But there was no doubt that this speech, if fully delivered, would occupy the Committee an hour and a half, and, like grape shot, the discharge would more or less grievously hit everybody within range. It would have been hard on Sir William, after all he had suffered in evolving the clause and preparing the speech, to abandon them at the last moment; but he will know now that it would have been wiser to do so. Since the Committee would not hear the speech, the author hit upon a compromise, bold and ingenious, but still not without its inconveniences. Hoping to soothe the feelings of hon. gentlemen opposite by the ostentatious haste with which he disposed of his notes, Sir William turned over a dozen or twenty pages at a time whilst reading forward consecutively. But it necessarily follows that if a man takes up one of those convenient five-quire packets of note-paper, writes out his speech thereon, and in reading it turns over half a quire at a time, there is an occasional break in the chain of the argument and some hitch in the applicability of the illustration.

Mr. Gladstone     This was bad for Sir William, with Mr. Gladstone explodes. sitting opposite to him in a coat that did not fit, and with Sir Stafford Northcote provokingly keeping out of the way. In addition to the little disadvantage hinted at above, which made him an easy prey to the Roaring Lion of the Irish Land Bill Debate, Sir William's propositions, as far as they could be understood, involved calculations disposing of State money. Now, if there is one thing more than another which Mr. Gladstone can't abear it is that a private member should presume publicly to do little sums that sound like extracts from Budget speeches. He tolerates Sir Stafford Northcote in this aspect because he has not only been Chancellor of the Exchequer, but has in finance sat at his own feet. Mr. Laing is another gentleman who may observe that twice two are four without fear of being immediately fallen upon and rent in twain. Also, out of respect for his extremely youthful appearance, and from a kindly desire not to ruffle his exceeding self-complacency, the Premier permits Mr. J. G. Hubbard to do a few sums in the House of Commons. But that Sir Wm. Palliser should, on the stroke of midnight of the thirty-second day of Committee on the Land Bill, propose a financial scheme, the secret and success of which dimly lay between three per cent. and three-and-a-quarter per cent., was more than the Premier (in a new coat) could stand.

Poor Sir William! It doubtless never occurred to him when he was preparing this luminous speech that it would come to pass that he would regard silence and indifference as its most desirable reception. If they would only take his speech home with them, and in the cool of the morning fit its fragments together like a Chinese puzzle, it would have been well. But that it should bring down on him this avalanche of kindling wrath was more than he had expected or deserved. It was not kind of Mr. Gladstone to declare in these exquisitely cutting sentences that he had not been able to catch his meaning. How could they expect to know what he meant when he was compelled to turn over ten pages at a time? He would gladly read the other nine if he were permitted, and once there seemed a glimmer of hope that opportunity was at hand. There was one portion of the speech in which Mr. Gladstone admitted he thought he *did* catch an echo of meaning. It was — and

the Premier set up, with too evident intention of presently knocking down, the disjointed fragment of the speech.

Here, at least, was a concession. If they would only argue instead of laugh and cry "Divide!" and "Agreed!" Sir William gratefully seized at the opening. He "rose to explain," and Mr. Gladstone, after a moment's hesitation, resumed his seat. Encouraged by the rare manifestation of attention, and really desiring to be friendly with the Committee, Sir William, having finished his correction of the Premier's reading, put his hand into his pocket and drawing forth the projectile, said, "Perhaps I had better explain." But at sight of the fatal manuscript the evil passion of the Committee broke forth with redoubled violence. Mr. Gladstone leaped to his feet and angrily resumed his place at the table, whilst Sir William, putting back the manuscript, dropped on his seat as if the bulky document were indeed a projectile, and had smitten him to the heart. The Premier trampled upon him as an elephant might tread down a reed in the jungle, finally crushing him with the emphatic declaration that for all the meaning it conveyed to the Committee his cherished new clause might as well have been printed in Sanscrit. And all this, or much of it, because in a moment of weakness the Premier had relinquished a tenant's interest in a familiar garment, and had entered upon a fresh holding, where (as is provided for in the fourth clause of the Land Bill) he found the incidence of tenancy subject to incommodious statutory conditions.

Aug. 3.—Mr. Bradlaugh "chucked out." At a quarter to twelve to-day (Monday) Mr. Bradlaugh, entering by the members' corridor, appeared in the lobby of the House of Commons. He had driven down to the House accompanied by his friend Dr. Aveling. But, in accordance with an order issued by the Speaker, forbidding entrance to any but members, this gentleman was stopped, and the member for Northampton entered unaccompanied. He walked forward in the direction of the door, which at this time was open, the House not being constituted. Taking note of this fact Mr. Bradlaugh halted in the centre of the lobby facing the door. At this time a considerable number of members were gathered, and gradually filled up the lobby. By the doorway sat the two doorkeepers, with four messengers,

two on either side. Beyond these were four policemen, with Inspector Denning casually standing by. No impediment was offered to the entrance of the member for Northampton, nor was any official notice taken of his presence in the lobby. Members stood about in groups, leaving the centre of the lobby clear, with Mr. Bradlaugh standing impassive. Shortly after noon the Speaker appeared in the usual procession, with the mace carried before him, and the train-bearer behind.

As soon as prayers were over and the Speaker had taken the Chair, Mr. Bradlaugh advanced towards the doorway. He was immediately confronted by Mr. Erskine, Deputy-Sergeant, who informed him that his orders from the Speaker were definite and peremptory, and that he must bar his entrance. Mr. Bradlaugh, protesting his legal right to enter, made a dash at the doorway, whereupon the messengers closed round him, seizing him by the arms and the collar of the coat. Mr. Bradlaugh, instinctively selecting the biggest man among his assailants, closed with him, grasped him by the collar, and apparently nearly choked him. The man, nevertheless, held on, his hand also at Mr. Bradlaugh's throat. With a simultaneous movement the messengers directed Mr. Bradlaugh's footsteps towards the door, he impartially kicking out, and always with his hand fastening on the collar of the unfortunate messenger whom he had first clutched at. Within the lobby the police took no action beyond closing in behind the messengers and pushing behind as they bore the captive out. He was taken by the main entrance leading out from the lobby, making a desperate struggle over every footstep. When clear of the House the police came to the assistance of the somewhat exhausted messengers, and took a more active part in propelling the member for Northampton towards the doorway leading into Palace-yard.

After an exciting struggle, Mr. Bradlaugh, still disputing every inch of the way, was delivered into the sorely-needed fresh air, and on to the pavement by the gateway. When he arrived he was still clutching the portly messenger, and the messenger still held on by his collar. Mr. Bradlaugh's urbanity returned with his breath, and he explained that the difficulty of loosing his earliest assailant was entirely a physical one. With the excitement his hand had closed upon the collar, and his muscles becoming contracted, he for some moments found it impossible

to loose him. Mr. Inspector Denning, who had brought up the rear of the highly-excited party, and who always knows how to combine the *suaviter in modo* with the *fortiter in re*, immediately sent for a glass of water, which Mr. Bradlaugh eagerly drank. With this expulsion from the precincts of the House the orders of the police were completed, and when Mr. Bradlaugh declared his intention of remaining till the result of the discussion in the House was arrived at, there was no authority to combat his intention. Accordingly, panting and ragged, the lining of his coat protruding from the rent garment, he stood at the entrance, genially conversing with his captors, and discussing various indifferent matters, from the state of the weather to the condition of the unhappy messenger who, nearly throttled at the outset, had clung with bulldog pertinacity to the scarcely less unfortunate object of his regard.

Aug. 5. — Mr. "Toots" MacIver. Apart from general business habits, born of peculiarly happy circumstances, the Lords have a short way with bores that might with advantage be imitated in another place. A comparison of the two Houses in this respect is made easy by the circumstance that two of the most unwise persons in the House of Commons find pretty close parallels in the House of Lords. Lord Stratheden and Campbell answers to Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett even in the particulars of a double-barrelled name; whilst Lord Denman, though much older than Mr. MacIver, is scarcely any wiser. Personally, his lordship lacks some of the graces which reflect from the House of Commons a haze of glory on Birkenhead. When Mr. MacIver leaps up with sudden action, as if his appearance were the result of Jack-in-box machinery, there is about him a provokingly pleased air, which at one time amused the House and caused it to titter in response to the new member's smile. It knows him better now, and, forecasting more truly what is in store for it, refuses to be beguiled even into the faintest reflection of the simper with which Mr. MacIver regards it. It is the ordinary fashion among members of the House that the commencement of speech should be simultaneous with their appearance on their legs. Mr. MacIver has introduced a variation on this practice. It is his habit when he rises to pause for an appreciable space of time, whilst, turning his head to

the right and to the left, he regards the House through his spectacles, and impartially bestows upon it a friendly smile of recognition. This interval is quite long enough for new members and strangers in the gallery to form the anticipation that presently the young gentleman will produce a card on which shall be clearly printed : "P. Toots, Esq., Brighton, Sussex."

But when he begins to speak it is clear that this, at least, is a misapprehension. Mr. Toots, whatever may have been his shortcomings, was not deficient in a true sense of his capacities.

"I am not what is considered a quick sort of person," he was accustomed to say. "I am perfectly aware of that. I don't think anybody could be better acquainted with his own—if it was not too strong an expression, say with the thickness of his own head than myself."

That is not a view of his position which Mr. MacIver is accustomed to take, though in justice to Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain it should be said that failure to do so is not due to any fault on their side. Mr. MacIver is as honest in intention as he is amiable in disposition. He really believes that he is right, and the rest of the House of Commons, including his own side, is wrong. That this should be so does not even startle him. He humbly feels that this disproportionate distribution of wisdom imposes upon him a sacred task and a solemn duty. Thus, in season and out of season, at question time and on going into Committee of Supply, he springs up with the Jack-in-box movement, and after smiling all round the House by way of personal assurance that he is not going to hurt anybody, sets himself to the task of converting hoary sinners like Mr. Bright, and of bringing back to the true path the faltering footsteps of Sir Stafford Northcote.

**Lord Denman.** Lord Denman, as becomes his added years, is of graver aspect than his shadow in the other House. Moreover, being a more cosmopolitan genius, he does not confine himself to discussions on Free Trade or any other branch of commerce. He is ready to speak on any subject—if he has a preference, let it relate to judicature. Their lordships are decidedly and unanimously of the opinion that what he has to say might well be left unsaid. But they are faced by a diffi-

culty inherent in the Constitution. In the House of Commons, when a member insists upon untimely speaking, it is open to other members to interrupt him with various more or less articulate noises. It would, of course, not be possible that demonstrations of this kind should disturb the serenity of the House of Lords, whatever may be the provocation. Besides, one cannot strike at a peer without hitting at the peerage. It is eminently undesirable that there should be acknowledgment of the possibility that a noble lord should also be a stupid man. The difficulty of dealing with Lord Denman, therefore, appears insuperable. But it is overcome in a manner that excites the envy of those who suffer from Mr. MacIver in the other House.

Lord Denman had a message to deliver on the second reading of the Land Bill. By a gentle pressure, equably bestowed, he was in some mysterious and silent manner shunted, till at two o'clock on Wednesday morning he found, to his surprise, that the Bill had been read a second time, and that his speech was undelivered. Then he took a desperate step which seemed to portend disaster to well-ordered plans. His speech was ready, and must be delivered. Since he was baulked on the second reading, he would exercise his privilege on the motion to go into Committee. This could not be prevented, and was therefore endured with a kind of stinging impatience which imperceptibly closed around the orator like the embraces of an octopus, and with gentle, but steady, pressure paralysed him till what had been intended for an oration two hours long became a few disjointed remarks that occupied scarcely fifteen minutes in delivery. With faltering accents Lord Denman sat down with half his arguments still on his manuscript and all his cutting things unsaid. There had been no interruption save a bland remark from Lord Airlie on a question of order. There were no cries of "Agreed!" or shouts for the division. Some noble lords had sauntered out; others remained and seized the opportunity to study the amendments or to talk to their neighbours. Yet, if Lord Denman looked in any particular direction to address a group of peers, they returned his glance with polite attention, as if, above all things, they were anxious to hear him. His position was that of an unwelcome guest, an unsolicited caller upon a well-bred host. Nobody told him to go. No one hinted that what he had to say was not only absolutely lacking in

interest, but was intolerably dull. He was a peer like one of themselves, and had due to him the affection of brotherhood. But he felt as he spoke that they so successfully dissembled their love, that, on the whole, a good honest kicking down-stairs would have been preferable.

Lord Stratheden and Campbell. Lord Denman so far felt this reception that he forgot the manners of the place, and hysterically protested that this was not the first time he had been bullied in their lordships' House. From this weakness Lord Stratheden and Campbell, preserving his moral and intellectual kinship with Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett, is free. His lordship has his eyes fixed afar on the machinations of foreign sovereigns, and cannot see anything so near at hand as glances of impatience. What would happen if in the Commons he were subject to the treatment reserved for Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett none can say. It might, if he had taken it younger, have done him good, though it must be admitted it does not seem to have that effect on the member for Eye. As it is, Lord Stratheden and Campbell, standing at the corner seat above the gangway, with his hands clasped before him, and his body slowly revolving in accordance with his mental habit of surveying the universe, drones forth his marvellously involved discourses on foreign affairs. He is harder to put down than Lord Denman, but the number of times that his incursions have been evaded, and the long vista pictured in the Order Book of amendments standing in his name which he has never moved, testify to the superior tactics in force in the House of Lords for the suppression of idle talk and the transaction of business.

Aug. 8. — A stranger in the House. About ten o'clock, just as the House was barking on a discussion on wild duck and ground game, some excitement was created by the discovery of a stranger on the floor of the House. This turned out to be a colossal black-beetle, whose devious course across the matting was watched with absorbing interest by the crowded House. When the stranger was first "spied" he was standing almost in the centre of the House at the gangway. His first movements were made in the direction of the corner below the gangway to the left of the Speaker, where the Fourth Party sit.

Abandoning his evident intention to join this party, he returned across the floor and made straight for the front bench below the gangway on the Ministerial side. Mr. Charles Russell, seated at the corner, skilfully baffled his intention of joining this section, the proceeding being watched with growing interest by the large number of members who had observed the stranger, and with marvel by the rest of the House, who could not make out what was the matter. Mr. Cartwright, entering and crossing by the gangway, very nearly brought the incident to a close by treading on the intruder. A little later a member coming from the benches below the gangway deliberately did so, the tragedy being hailed with a prolonged moaning cry of "Oh, oh!"

At this moment the Attorney-General for Ireland, who was not in the secret, was addressing the House explanatory of Ministerial intention on an amendment to the fifth clause of Sir W. Harcourt's Bill. The right hon. gentleman, thinking he had inadvertently said something that shocked the House, stopped in his speech and turned round with inquiring glance; whereupon the cry of execration changed to a burst of laughter, and it was only after Mr. Gladstone had laughingly explained to his colleagues where the fun lay that Mr. Law proceeded with his speech.

Aug. 12.—Business in the Lords. Dr. Lyon Playfair standing on the steps of the Throne, with his hand on the rails in an attitude suggestive of intent to repeat for the instruction of the House of Lords his celebrated Parliamentary lecture on oleo-margarine, gazes with mournful earnestness on the broad back of Lord Redesdale. The Lord Chancellor has gone to snatch a hasty dinner, besought by Lord Granville, an' he love him, to get back as quickly as possible. In the meanwhile Lord Redesdale, as Chairman of Committees, sits on the woolsack and directs the business of the assembly which controls the House of Commons, which represents the people. The woolsack is not, *per se*, a convenient place for any man to sit on. Lord Selborne, who when fully seated can comfortably touch the ground with his feet, does passably well, and the gown and wig of the Lord Chancellor, incongruous themselves, counteract the incongruity of a gentleman past the prime of life being obliged to sit bolt upright on an apparently backless ottoman. But

Lord Redesdale, in the severe simplicity of evening dress, looks odder than ever, planted in the midst of a roomy and highly-pitched scarlet bench, with one foot touching the ground, and the other so disposed as to display to awe-stricken strangers in the gallery a considerable portion of a white sock above a sturdy shoe.

How Lord Redesdale conducts it. Seated thus, Lord Redesdale has a difficulty with "line 20, page 9," of the Commons' Amendments to the Lords' Amendments to the Land Bill. It is, perhaps, too presumptuous to say that the Chairman of Committees has a difficulty with the amendment. Difficulty, in its ordinary sense, has no place in the vocabulary of Lord Redesdale. The unhappy amendment may be in a difficulty with the Chairman of Committees; but that is obviously another thing. If this were a committee room of the House, instead of the House itself, Lord Redesdale would make short work with the Commons' amendments. In the first place, he would order the Commons to leave the room; whereupon, of course, there would be no amendment, and the difficulty would thus be overcome with the least possible friction. But as it is, in a full House assembled, with a crowd of Commons at the Bar, and the weakness of their lordships in admitting reporters bearing its fruit in the gallery opposite, that sort of thing will not precisely do. His lordship has already attempted to solve the matter in another way. Coming to the amendment, and perceiving that whatever its ultimate or detailed meaning might imply, it was a presumptuous attempt on the part of the House of Commons to meddle with an amendment passed by the House of Lords, the noble earl, to save time, said (as if the words formed one polysyllable)—

"That-the-House-insist-on-the-said-amendment-those-who-are-of-that-opinion-say-'content'-contrary-'not-content'-contents-have-it."

Whereafter he proceeded to the next amendment. But Earl Granville, who for a peer of undoubted blood is very troublesome, hinted that there was a mistake somewhere. Lord Salisbury, who has a great admiration for Lord Redesdale's business capacity, assented, whilst adroitly implying that the mistake was due to some occult influence on the part of a personage in another place, a suggestion which happily mollified the suddenly ignited wrath of the Chairman of Committees.

Deference to the  
Chairman.

Dr. Lyon Playfair saw all this from his watch-tower by the Throne. He also saw Lord Salisbury and Lord Cranbrook leave their places, and standing with deferential mien by the side of the woolsack, endeavour to point out to Lord Redesdale how, doubtless owing to the clamour of the Commons at the bar, or the rustling of paper in the press gallery, there had been some misapprehension of the precise position of the Bill. As Lord Salisbury bent over the open copy of the amendments which he held in his hand, Lord Cranbrook standing aligned with the woolsack, also with open paper resting on the palm of his hand, the noble lords irresistibly called to mind the two bad boys of the school, called up to the master's desk with their task in hand. On the other side of the woolsack, at a respectful distance, Lord Carlingford deferentially stood, also with a copy of the amendments in his hand, prepared, if the mighty pedagogue would condescend to raise his eyes from the paper he was moodily regarding, to point out where the mistake lay. On the back of the woolsack Lord Lathom reclined, he, too, with a copy of the amendments, and the plain intent to point out something to the Chairman if he might find a safe opening. Failing that, his lordship advanced and drew back pantomimically as the dread Chairman of Committees moved his head.

Sad memories.

A shadow came over the cheerful countenance of Dr. Lyon Playfair as he watched this scene. His chin sank upon his breast, and an air of great dejection stole over his form. Oleo-margarine pleased him not, nor butterine either. He, also, was Chairman of Committees. But what a change in the two places! He called to mind occasions when, badgered by Mr. Biggar, harried by Mr. Healy, and petrified by Mr. Parnell, he had inadvertently put the cart before the horse—the “Noes” before the “Ayes.” He distinctly remembered one occasion when, having, amidst much embarrassment, adroitly fostered from the Irish quarter, named Lord Richard Grosvenor and Lord Kensington as tellers for the Parnellites, he had invited Ministers, ex-Ministers, and the majority of the House to go out under the direction of Mr. Healy and Mr. Biggar. What had happened then? Had the master of legions in the House come humbly to his Chair and pointed out with deferential mien that, unquestionably

owing to the bustle of the moment, the House had not correctly caught his words, and that if it were not too much trouble, it would be a favour if he would repeat them? Alas! no. Mr. Gorst, seated with his hat on, formally raised as a point of order the question whether, the tellers having been assigned by the Chairman, it was not absolutely necessary that the arrangement should be carried out. This and other memories crowded on the mind of Dr. Playfair as, standing by the steps of the Throne, he saw what it was to be Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords.

*Obdurate.* Still watching with keen though melancholy interest, he saw how Lord Redesdale declined to be mollified by these obsequious attentions of the leaders of party who stood with bowed heads on either side of the woolsack, or by the more mysterious though not less deferential gyrations of Lord Lathom at the rear. Lord Redesdale gathered generally from these demonstrations that there had been a mistake somewhere. Had he followed the impulse of his mind he would have said, "Those-who-are-of-that-opinion-say-'content'-contrary-'not-content'-contents-have-it," and turned over on to the next page. But it was evidently something serious. Instinctively he turned a glowering glance towards the Ministerial bench, as being the quarter of the House whence mistakes more usually came. Lord Carlingford, intercepting this regard, falteringly retired and resumed his seat by Lord Granville, without venturing to say what he had at heart when he timidly approached the woolsack. After some further consultation Lord Salisbury and Lord Cranbrook also retired, Lord Cranbrook, who has been Minister of War, utilising his strategic knowledge by keeping Lord Salisbury between himself and the woolsack as he retreated. Lord Lathom, finding himself alone in this terrible contiguity, withdrew to the further end of the woolsack, still keeping an eye on Lord Redesdale, and prepared, if he accidentally turned his head, desperately to seize the favourable opportunity and submit the point he had in his mind.

*Triumphant.* Being now at a comparatively safe distance, Lord Salisbury ventured to offer some remarks in a conversational tone addressed to the woolsack, from the

neighbourhood of which a low growling was heard, understood in remote quarters of the House to be the voice of the Chairman of Committees discussing the points submitted. In other parts of the House silence reigned. Noble lords, seated at safe distance, had upon their faces that expression of pleased excitement and expectation with which a crowd of civilians watch torpedo practice. For fully five minutes the growling noise from the woolsack was heard, varied by humbly explanatory tones issuing from the front Opposition bench. Then suddenly, as if long-suffering patience and a kindly desire to deal considerately with human weakness had gone the full length of its tether and had snapped, the voice of the Chairman was distinctly heard to say—

“Those-who-are-of-that-opinion-say-‘content’-contrary-‘not-content’-contents-have-it.”

Then followed a hushed silence, and no movement for the division. “Clear the bar!” a timid voice suggested in completion of the formula which directs a division in the House of Lords. “Clear the bar!” Lord Redesdale echoed, and presently the crowd of peers who had been dining came streaming in and surrounded the woolsack. Confident in their numbers, they ventured to ask what the question was. But Lord Redesdale had nothing more to say, and for all answer he made gesture with his right thumb over his shoulder, pointing the stream into the “Content” lobby.

Aug. 19. — The  
O’Gorman Ma-  
hon on the  
Lords’ Amend-  
ment to the  
Land Bill.

When The O’Gorman Mahon first entered Parliament as representative of the constituency for which he now sits, Charles X. had just abdicated his throne, and Louis Philippe was barely seated in his place; George IV. was but yesterday dead, and William reigned in his stead. The Duke of Wellington had been replaced in the Premiership by Earl Grey; Mr. Disraeli was not in Parliament, had not even canvassed Marylebone in the Radical interest; and Mr. Gladstone was still at Oxford reading for his degree. Many of those now privileged to hear the rumblings of The Mahon’s volcanic voice were not born when he first walked up the floor of the House. Others were in petticoats, and none were in Parliament. Making due allowance for the lesser span of the life of man, The Mahon, addressing the House of Com-

mons, is like the pyramids, whose forty centuries looked down on the hosts of Napoleon in Egypt.

At a late hour to-night it occurred to the hon. and gallant gentleman that he would offer a few remarks on the situation. He had come not unprepared, and, finding the standing attitude most convenient for studying his notes before commencing to speak, there was, after his rising, sufficient interval for the House to observe that he had forgotten to button his waistcoat, and that beneath a black scarf gleamed a blood-red shirt. This, if any one had dared to mention it in the hearing of the old warrior, was a Parliamentary manner not without precedent. The Mahon remembers Sir Charles Wetherell, with whom he had a brief companionship in the unreformed Parliament. Sir Charles had a pleasing passion for discarding the use of braces when addressing the House of Commons, and by the time he reached the conclusion of his speech there was usually plainly discernible a space between his waistcoat and his trousers—"his only lucid interval," the Speaker of the day wittily remarked. The Mahon preserved something of the Parliamentary appearance of the famous Recorder of Bristol. But there was nothing lacking in the lucidity of his speech. His attitudes were reminiscent of his amphibious warlike occupations in South America. Sometimes he hitched at his nether garments as if he were on board ship. Anon he executed a flank movement with sword arm uplifted, to the great peril of Mr. Healy, who shared the bench with him.

The general idea of his military operations, whether by sea or land, was that the enemy lay on the other side of the lobby, and with strident voice and warlike gesture he bade the House follow him to their dislodgment.

"Are we," he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, shaking his fist in the direction of the House of Lords, "to be bullied by the wretched mischief-makers at the other end of the lobby?"

Pursuing this line of reflection The Mahon supposed a case.

"If I had," he said, momentarily subduing his manner to the argumentative, "If I had the misfortune to be born the son of a booby peer——"

Here the Speaker, who had for some time been uneasy under The Mahon's method of reference to the other House, interposed. Whereupon the ancient warrior, with graceful alacrity,

hauled down his colours and ran up the white flag. It was not for him to fight with women, or with the Speaker of the House of Commons. Having resumed his seat, he exclaimed, with both hands outstretched, "Of course, I bow ; certainly, I bow. Allow me to say one more word, Mr. Speaker, and I'll bow at once."

"But, God bless my soul!" as he exclaimed when permitted to resume, "are we to be at the mercy of a scratch of the pen of the Irresponsibilities at the other end of the lobby?"

After addressing the House for the space of half an hour it might have been thought that he had exhausted his ammunition. But, like a cautious old campaigner, he had kept one shot in his locker, and this he delivered with tremendous effect at the very moment when it was supposed his fire had ceased. "Avoid Gibson!" he roared in deepest chest-notes, amid hilarious laughter, a rare indulgence which Mr. Gladstone permitted himself to the full. This was the last word of The Mahon, a compendious political programme, which, faithfully and intelligently followed, would lead to the pacification and prosperity of Ireland and the everlasting renown of a Liberal Ministry.

A brother  
veteran.

In a session not bare of episode nothing has been prettier or more touching than Mr. Gladstone's handling of this oration, and of the veteran who delivered it. A great deal had happened since these two first sat together in the House of Commons, and Mr. Gladstone owned the pathos of the tie in graceful words and with a cordial manner that brought tears into the dimmed eyes of the old warrior. True to his habit, when the leader of the House rose he left the place whence he had delivered his speech, and seated himself on the front Opposition bench, so that he immediately faced the Premier. Mr. Gladstone, leaning on the despatch box, talked across the table to him, and every time that, with kindly inclination of the head, he called him "my hon. friend," The O'Gorman Mahon brought his right hand to his forehead with military salute.

Aug. 27. Parliament prorogued.

## CALENDAR OF THE SESSION.

### JANUARY.

7. Thurs.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. Debate adjourned.

8. Fri.—Ireland (State of). Motion for adjournment of House, *Mr. O'Kelly*. Division—For, 38. Against, 263.

9. H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 2nd Day. Amendment moved, *Mr. Parnell*.

10. Mon.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 3rd Day.

11. Tues.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 4th Day.

12. Wed.—Married Women's Property (Scotland) Bill. Division on Postponement of Second Reading—For, 230. Against, 33.

13. H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 5th Day.

14. Thurs.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 6th Day.

15. Fri.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 7th Day. Division on Mr. Parnell's Amendment—For, 57. Against, 435. Debate on original Motion adjourned.

16. Mon.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 8th Day. Amendment moved, *Mr. J. McCarthy*.

17. Tues.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 9th Day. Division on Mr. McCarthy's Amendment—For, 37. Against, 201.

18. Wed.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 10th Day. Amendment moved, *Mr. Dawson*.

19. Thurs.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 11th Day. *Mr. Dawson's* Amendment. Withdrawn. Amendment moved, *Mr. Sexton*. Division thereon—For, 36.

20. Fri.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. 12th Day. *Mr. Dawson's* Amendment. Withdrawn. Amendment moved, *Mr. Sexton*. Division thereon—For, 36.

21. Sat.—Transvaal Annexation. Motion, *Mr. Rylands*. Division—For, 33. Against, 129.

22. Mon.—Protection, &c. (Ireland) Bill. Motion for Leave, *Mr. W. E. Forster*. Amendment moved, *Dr. Lyons*. Debate adjourned.

23. Tues.—Business of the House, the Protection, &c., and Peace, &c. (Ireland) Bills. *Mr. Gladstone*. Amendment moved, *Mr. A. O'Connor*. Mr. Biggar suspended. Motion, Adjournment of Debate, *Mr. Healy*. For, 35. Against, 234. Do. of House, *Mr. Gray*. For, 34. Against, 277. Do. of Debate, *Mr. Byrne*, For, 24. Against, 135. Do. of House, *Mr. Dillon*. For, 21. Against, 125. Do. of Debate, *Mr. Sexton*. Negatived. Division on Main Question—For, 251. Against, 33. House adjourned at 2.5 p.m. (22 hours' Sitting.)

24. Wed.—Protection, &c. (Ireland) Bill. Debate on Motion for Leave. 2nd Day.

25. Thurs.—Protection, &c. (Ireland) Bill. Do. 3rd Day.

### FEBRUARY.

Protection, &c. (Ireland) Bill. Debate on Motion for Leave. 4th Day.

Motion. Adjournment of Debate. *Mr. Gabbett*. (*Mr. Deputy-Speaker* took the Chair, 4.50 to 1 p.m.) Division—For, 27. Against, 148. Do. of House, *Mr. Healy*. (*Mr. Speaker* resumed the Chair, 1.25 p.m.) Division—For, 21. Against, 225. Do. of Debate, *Mr. Daly*. For, 23. Against, 163. Do. of House, *Mr. Finigan*. (*Mr. Deputy-Speaker* took the Chair, 11.35 p.m.) Division — For, 92. Against, 197.

*Mr. Speaker* resumed the Chair, 9 a.m., and put the Question forthwith. Division—For *Dr. Lyons'* Amendment, 19. Against, 164. Bill ordered. House adjourned at 9.30. (4½ hours' Sitting.)

2. Wed.—Motion for Adjournment of House, *Mr. A. M. Sullivan*. For, 44. Against, 278.

3. Thurs.—Business of House (Urgency). Motion, *Mr. Gladstone*. (The suspension of several Members took place.) Motion amended and agreed to.

4. Fri.—Protection, &c. (Ireland), Bill. 2nd Reading. 1st Day.

5. Mon.—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd Day.

6. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 3rd Day.

7. Wed.—Ditto. Division—For, 359. Against, 56. 4th Day. Bill committed.

8. Thurs.—Protection, &c. (Ireland), Bill Committee. 1st Day.

9. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd Day.

10. Mon.—Ditto. Ditto. 3rd Day.

11. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 4th Day.

12. Wed.—Ditto. Ditto. 5th Day.

13. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. 6th Day.

14. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 7th Day.

15. Mon.—Ditto. Ditto. 8th Day.

16. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 9th Day.

Clauses, Amendments, &c., after 12 o'clock put forthwith. Bill reported.

17. Wed.—Protection, &c. (Ireland), Bill. Consideration. 1st Day. Amendments after 7 o'clock, put forthwith. 3rd Reading. Debate adjourned.

18. Thurs.—Protection, &c. (Ireland), Bill. 3rd Reading. For, 321. Against, 51. Motion, that Bill do pass, put forthwith. For, 282. Against, 32. Bill passed.

19. Fri.—Supply. Motion, *Irish Magistracy*, *Mr. O'Donnell*.

## MARCH.

1. *Tues.*—Peace Preservation (Ireland) Bill. Ordered.  
 2. *Wed.*—Ditto. Second Reading. 1st Day.  
 3. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd Day.  
     Supply: Army Statement, *Mr. Childers*. Committed.  
 4. *Fri.*—Peace Preservation (Ireland) Bill. Committed.  
 7. *Mon.*—Ditto. Committee. 1st Day.  
 8. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd Day.  
 9. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 3rd Day.  
     Remaining clauses disposed of after 3 o'clock forthwith. Bill reported.  
 10. *Thurs.*—Peace Preservation (Ireland) Bill. Considered.  
 11. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. Read 3<sup>o</sup>.  
 14. *Mon.*—Business of the House (Urgency). Motion, *Mr. Gladstone*. For, 296. Against, 212. Not declared in the affirmative.  
     Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 15. *Tues.*—Assassination of the Emperor of Russia. Address.  
     Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 16. *Wed.*—Supply: Afghan War Vote.  
 17. *Thurs.*—Supply: Army Estimates.  
 18. *Fri.*—Supply: Navy Estimates.

21. *Mon.*—Supply: Army, &c., Estimates.  
 22. *Tues.*—Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act. Motion, *Mr. Chaplin*. For, 147. Against, 205.  
 23. *Wed.*—Agricultural Tenants, &c., Bill. *Mr. Chaplin*. Committed.  
 24. *Thurs.*—Afghanistan. Motion, *Mr. E. Stanhope*. Debate adjourned.  
 25. *Fri.*—Ditto. For, 216. Against, 336.  
 28. *Mon.*—Army Discipline Bill. Committed. Highways. Motion, *Mr. Harcourt*. Amended and agreed to.  
     Thames River Bill. *Withdrawn*.  
 29. *Tues.*—Decimal Coinage. Motion, *Mr. A. Dilke*. Negatived.  
     Patronage (Benefices). Motion, *Mr. Leatham*. *Withdrawn*.  
 30. *Wed.*—Metropolitan Open Spaces Bill. *Mr. James*. Committed. Elections (Closing of Public Houses) Bill. *Mr. Carbutt*. Debates adjourned.  
 31. *Thurs.*—Army Discipline Bill. Committed. Bill reported.  
     Rivers Conservancy Bill. 2nd Reading. Debate adjourned.

## APRIL.

1. *Fri.*—Northampton (New Writ). Moved. Butter. Motion, *Sir H. Maxwell*. Negatived.  
 4. *Mon.*—Financial Statement, *Mr. Gladstone*. Army Discipline Bill. Considered.  
 5. *Tues.*—Evictions (Ireland). Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. T. P. O'Connor*. House counted out.  
 6. *Wed.*—Lunacy Law (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Litton*. Committed. Middlesex Land Registry Bill. *Mr. Hopwood*. *Withdrawn*.  
 7. *Thurs.*—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Read 1<sup>o</sup>. Rivers Conservancy Bill. Committed.  
 8. *Fri.*—Bankruptcy Bill. Read 1<sup>o</sup>.  
 25. *Mon.*—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. Debate adjourned.

26. *Tues.*—Parliamentary Oath. (*Mr. Bradlaugh*.) *Mr. Bradlaugh*. Motion, *Sir S. Northcote*. For, 208. Against, 175.  
 27. *Wed.*—Parliamentary Oath. (*Mr. Bradlaugh*.) *Mr. Bradlaugh* removed by the Sergeant below the Bar. Church Boards Bill. *Mr. A. Grey*. 2nd Reading. Debate adjourned.  
 28. *Thurs.*—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. 2nd Day.  
 29. *Fri.*—Power of Representatives (Abroad). Motion, *Mr. Richard*. For, 64. Against, 72. India (Opium Trade). Observations, *Mr. Pease*.

## MAY.

2. *Mon.*—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. 3rd Day. Parliamentary Oaths Bill. *Mr. Attorney-General*. Motion for leave. Debate adjourned.  
 3. *Tues.*—Agricultural Holdings (Distress for Rent). Motion, *Mr. Blennerhassett*. Agreed to.  
 4. *Wed.*—Sale of Intoxicating Liquors Sunday (Wales) Bill. *Mr. Roberts*. 2nd Reading. For, 163. Against, 17. Bill committed.  
 5. *Thurs.*—Afghan War. Vote of Thanks. Land Law (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. 4th Day.  
 6. *Fri.*—Agricultural Labourers (Ireland). Motion, *Mr. Callan*. Amended and agreed to. Parliamentary Oaths Bill. Debate on Motion for Leave further adjourned.  
 9. *Mon.*—Earl of Beaconsfield (Monument). Motion, *Mr. Gladstone*. For, 380. Against, 54. Land Law (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. 5th Day. Parliamentary Oaths Bill. Debate again adjourned.

10. *Tues.*—Parliamentary Oaths (*Mr. Bradlaugh*). *Mr. Bradlaugh* removed by the Sergeant from the House. Protection, &c. (Ireland) Act. Motion for adjournment, *Mr. Parnell*. Agreed to.  
 11. *Wed.*—Newspapers (Law of Libel) Bill. Committed.  
 12. *Thurs.*—Business of the House. Motion for adjournment, *Lord R. Churchill*. Negatived. Land Law (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. 6th Day.  
 13. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Oaths (*Mr. Bradlaugh*). Motion for adjournment, *Mr. Labouchere*. *Withdrawn*. Minister of Agriculture, &c. Motion, *Sir M. Lopes*. Amended and agreed to.  
 16. *Mon.*—Ireland (State of). Motion for adjournment, *Mr. Healy*. *Withdrawn*. France and Tunis. Motion for adjournment, *Mr. M. Guest*. *Withdrawn*. Land Law (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. 7th Day.

## MAY (continued).

17. Tues.—Ireland (State of). Motion for adjournment, *Mr. Lalor*. For, 23. Against, 317.  
Business of the House. Motion, *Mr. Dillwyn*. Withdrawn.  
National Expenditure. Motion, *Mr. H. H. Fowler*. House counted out.

18. Wed.—Free Education (Scotland) Bill. *Dr. Cameron*. 2nd Reading. Put off six months.

19. Thurs.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. 8th Day. Division—For, 932. Against, 176.

20. Fri.—Ireland (State of). Motion for adjournment, *Mr. O'Sullivan*. For, 32. Against, 130.  
Intoxicating Liquors (Saturday) Ireland. Motion, *Mr. Meldon*. For, 33. Against, 49.

23. Mon.—Customs, &c., Bill. Amendment (Local Taxation), *Mr. Pell*. Moved and negatived. Committee, 1st Day.

Irish Executive. Motion, *Mr. McCarthy*. Debate adjourned.

24. Tues.—Irish Executive. Motion. Debate further adjourned.

25. Wed.—Ascension Day. Motion. For, 58. Against, 41.  
Lunacy Law Amendment Bill. *Mr. Dillwyn*. Committed.

26. Thurs.—Customs Bill. Reported.  
Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 1st Day.

27. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd Day.  
Supply: Army Estimates.

30. Mon.—Privilege (Mr. P. Egan). Motion, *Mr. Henry*. Withdrawn.  
Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 3rd Day.

31. Tues.—Derby Day. Motion for adjournment, *Mr. R. Power*. For, 246. Against, 119.  
Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 4th Day.

## JUNE.

2. Thurs.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 5th Day.

3. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto, 6th Day.

9. Thurs.—Supply. Commercial Treaty (France). Motion, *Mr. Monk*. For, 49. Against, 77. Civil Service Estimates.

10. Fri.—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

13. Mon.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 7th Day.

14. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 8th Day.  
Liquor Traffic. Motion, *Sir W. Lawson*. For, 196. Against, 154.

15. Wed.—Patents Bill. *Mr. Anderson*. Committed.

16. Thurs.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 9th Day.

17. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 10th Day.

20. Mon.—Ditto. Ditto. 11th Day.

21. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto, 12th Day.

22. Wed.—Capital Punishment Bill. *Mr. Pease*. 2nd Reading. For, 79. Against, 175.

23. Thurs.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 13th Day.

24. Fri.—Army Organisation. Statement, *Mr. Childers*.  
Anglo-Turkish Convention. *Mr. Rylands*. House counted.

27. Mon.—Ireland (State of). Adjournment of House, *Mr. O'Donnell*. For, 28. Against, 305.  
Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 14th Day.

28. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 15th Day.

29. Wed.—Ditto. Ditto. 16th Day.

30. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. 17th Day.

## JULY.

1. Fri.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 18th Day.

4. Mon.—Ditto. Ditto. 19th Day.

5. Tues.—New French Tariff. Motion for Adjournment of House, *Viscount Sandon*. Withdrawn.  
Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 20th Day.

6. Wed.—Ditto. Ditto. 21st Day.

7. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. 22nd Day.

8. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 23rd Day.

11. Mon.—Ireland (State of). Motion for Adjournment of House, *Mr. Daly*. For, 26. Against, 279.  
Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Committee, 24th Day.

12. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 25th Day.

13. Wed.—Ditto. Ditto. 26th Day.

14. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. 27th Day.

15. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 28th Day.

18. Mon.—Ditto. Ditto. 29th Day.

19. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 30th Day.

20. Wed.—Ditto. Ditto. 31st Day.

21. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. 32nd Day.

22. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 33rd Day. Bill reported.

25. Mon.—Transvaal Rising. Motion, *Sir M. H. Beach*. For, 205. Against, 314.

26. Tues.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Considered. 1st Day.

27. Wed.—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd Day.

28. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. To be Read 3<sup>rd</sup>.

29. Fri.—Ditto. 3rd Reading. For, 220. Against, 14.

## AUGUST.

1. Mon.—Business of the House. Ministerial Statement. *Mr. Parnell* suspended. Regulation of the Forces Bill. Committee. Bill reported.

2. Tues.—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

3. Wed.—Privilege (Mr. Bradlaugh.) Motion, *Mr. Labouchere*. Amendment moved, *Sir H. Holland*. For the Amendment, 191. Against, 7.  
Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

4. Thurs.—Ireland (State of). Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. Redmond*. For, 11. Against, 191.  
Supply. *Mr. O'Kelly's* suspension. Observations, *Mr. Parnell*. Army Estimates.

5. Fri.—Supply: Army and Civil Service Estimates.

6. Sat.—Supply: Navy and Civil Service Estimates.

## AUGUST (continued).

8. Mon.—Supply. Education. Statement, <i>Mr. Mundella</i> . Civil Service Estimates.	18. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. For, 30. Against. 83. Supply: Civil Service Estimates.
9. Tues.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Lords' Amendments considered.	19. Fri.—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.
10. Wed.—Ditto. Ditto.	20. Sat.—Mr. M. Davitt. Motion, <i>Mr. Parnell</i> . For, 19. Against, 61. Supply: Civil Service Estimates.
11. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto.	22. Mon.—India. Financial Statement, <i>The Marquis of Hartington</i> .
12. Fri.—French Commercial Treaty. Motion, <i>Mr. Ritchie</i> . For, 80. Against, 153.	23. Tues.—Supreme Court of Judicature Bill. Read 2 <sup>o</sup> . Consolidated Fund Bill. Committed.
13. Sat.—Supply: Navy (Sobriety). Motion, <i>Mr. Caine</i> . The Atlanta. Observations, <i>Mr. Jenkins</i> . House counted out.	24. Wed.—Supreme Court of Judicature Bill. Reported. Consolidated Fund Bill. Reported.
15. Mon.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. Lords' Reasons and Amendments considered.	25. Thurs.—Consolidated Fund Bill. Read 3 <sup>o</sup> .
16. Tues.—Supply: Navy Estimates.	27. Sat.—Prorogation.
17. Wed.—Irish Executive. Motion, <i>Mr. Parnell</i> . Debate adjourned.	

## SESSION 1882.

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### CHAPTER XVI.

#### DISTINGUISHED OBSTRUCTIONISTS.

Session opens—Agricultural Depression—Mr. Bradlaugh takes the Oath—A Silent Member—Mr. Healy in gentle Mood—“A Waterloo-House-young-man”—Lord Emlyn speaks—A Proposal in the Interests of Public Business—Mr. Forster.

Feb. 7.—Session opens. The new Session opened to-day. Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself with the demand to have the oath administered to him, and, after the now familiar process, was voted out.

Feb. 17.—Agricultural depression. The country party brought forward to-night the subject of Agricultural Depression. The proceedings were more in the way of a drawing-room charade than a party debate, and not even the dullest looker-on could fail to guess that “the word” was Depression. Sir Walter Barttelot, who opened the proceedings, was perhaps a little ill-chosen. He is so emphatic in his gestures, and so impressive in his emphasis on what appear to be the least important syllables in a word, that he presented an appearance of vigour a little out of place. The House of Commons listening to him is plunged in alternate conditions of sympathy and marvel. No one accustomed to use the English language can look on without pain at the extraordinary process of dislocation which Sir Walter works among polysyllables. If the mind grows hardened to this process, as the senses of a surgeon in hospital practice become dulled by his daily work, it is disturbed by marvel as to where Sir Walter will land with the end of his sentence. He plunges into the English language as a dauntless boy who cannot swim, but who is endowed with a life-belt, jumps into the water. The boy does not progress in any particular direction; but he keeps afloat, makes a terrible splash,

and gets through much work in five minutes. Thus Sir Walter, addressing the House of Commons, plunges into a sentence, quite certain that, somehow or other, he will get to the end of it. Often the process is long, and the breathless listener begins to fear the worst. But Sir Walter always comes to an end, or at least reaches a full stop, and looks terribly like having said something that settled matters. The trifling circumstances that the end of his sentence has nothing to do with the beginning, and that the middle introduces a fresh topic, are not permitted to check the flow of his oratory. Besides, if he is ever at a loss for a word, he can always throw in "I am not one of those who," or "I venture to say." These stop-gaps, delivered with emphatic beat of hand and arm to the left or the right, have been found very convincing.

Sir Walter was a little exhausting in view of the special character of the evening. Matters improved when, at a critical juncture, Mr. Storer was put forward, and Mr. Gregory did much to support the piece. At midnight Sir Stafford Northcote, who had been brought in half an hour earlier, received the cue, and contributed largely to the success of the evening. He spoke in a low tone, suitable to the occasion, and with scarcely any inflection of his voice.

It was curious to note how fresh members just arriving looked. Lord Percy, entering on the stroke of midnight, never before so fully realised the ideal of vivacity. Next in proportion to the briskness with which new-comers entered was the swiftness with which they collapsed. In countries frequented by the mosquito, it is said that new arrivals always suffer more sharply, and succumb more speedily, than those who have become acclimatised. Thus it was in the House to-night. Members who had stood three or four hours of the kind of thing in progress had overcome acuter symptoms; but new arrivals, like Sir James Hogg, for example, underwent swift and sudden transformation. The Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works, briskly entering, stood for a minute at the Bar, as if staggered by the sight, or suddenly impregnated by some strange quality in the atmosphere. Pulling himself together, he walked hastily down the House, and took his seat. Here the spell rapidly worked. Sir James struggled against it with skill and determination. Taking off his crush hat, he shut it up

and opened it with a loud bang. This revived him for a moment. In the next he had put his hat on with the back to the front, and had joined the majority in sleep. Perhaps the oddest thing, where much was strange, was the muffled sound of the occasional applause evoked by the gentle eloquence of the leader of the Opposition. It appeared as if the ghosts of cheers long ago died away had arisen to fill the chamber with the hollow far-off sound. It was quite in the order of things that presently the debate should flicker out, no one precisely knowing how or why it died, and that as the clocks chimed a quarter past one members should be awakened by the voice of Mr. O'Donnell to the knowledge that they were once more in the midst of an Irish debate.

Feb. 21. — Mr.  
Bradlaugh  
takes the oath.

In the course of recent Sessions the House of Commons has been accustomed to surprises. But it is difficult to recall a scene which, for dramatic and, in some respects, farcical character, will compare with that which to-day amazed it. There was a full House when the Speaker took the chair, and the customary assortment of questions was answered, and notices of motion given. When the preliminary business was over, Mr. Labouchere moved that "Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new writ for the election of a member to serve in the present Parliament for the borough of Northampton, in the room of Charles Bradlaugh, Esq., who by resolution of the House has been prevented from taking and subscribing the oath prescribed by law." He contended that the House, having come to the resolution that Mr. Bradlaugh was not to be allowed to take the oath of allegiance, had for all practical purposes declared him disqualified for sitting and voting, and therefore the seat was practically vacated. Lord R. Churchill agreed with this conclusion, but on other grounds, which he formulated in an amendment by which he proposed to leave out all words after "who" in Mr. Labouchere's resolution, and insert these words, "is disqualified by law from taking his seat in this House."

The Speaker rose at half-past six to put the question. According to the forms of the House of Commons, the question put first was that Lord Randolph Churchill's amendment should be substituted for the concluding clause of the

resolution. This was negative, and a like fate befell the proposition next in order, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question." The consequence, at first bewildering, was soon discovered to be ludicrous. The House having decided against the amendment, and also against the words for which the amendment had been suggested, the resolution was lamentably lopped off short after the word "who." Mr. Labouchere, rising amid prolonged laughter, proposed to patch up the rent; but it was too late, and the House divided upon the question put from the Chair in the following terms: "That Mr. Speaker do issue his warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new writ for the election of a member to serve in the present Parliament for the borough of Northampton, in the place of Charles Bradlaugh, Esq., who—."

The Speaker then declared that the "Noes" had it, and was supported by cries of "Hear, hear!" during which Mr. Bradlaugh came down from his seat and stood at the Bar, apparently ready to advance up the floor. But, Mr. Labouchere persisting in challenging the decision, Mr. Bradlaugh returned to his seat, the House was cleared, and members who had left during the debate, came back to hear with wonder the question with its odd conclusion, "Charles Bradlaugh, Esq., who—." The Speaker, having some hesitation in naming tellers for the "Noes," received a communication from Lord Frederick Cavendish, on which he announced that the tellers would be the Ministerial whips, at which there was some laughter and cheering from the Opposition. Mr. Ashton Dilke "told" with Mr. Labouchere. The Parnellites voted with the "Ayes," and swelled the minority to the number of 18, whilst 307 passed into the "No" lobby, where Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Gladstone, Lord Randolph Churchill and the Attorney-General met.

Whilst the debate had been in progress, Mr. Bradlaugh had been seated under the gallery, where he remained during the division, in spite of invitations of the messenger to obey the injunction to clear the House. He left his seat, and moved down towards the Bar as the tellers advanced to the table. As soon as the Speaker had repeated the figures he marched up the House towards the table. Members looked on the familiar promenade with that absence of curiosity which is the penalty

attached to frequent repetition. They had often seen Mr. Bradlaugh project himself into the middle of business, and thought his present approach to the table would end in the ordinary manner. Whilst all eyes were turned upon the Speaker, expecting him to make the usual request that Mr. Bradlaugh would retire, it was discovered that the hon. member had a book in his hand, and was offering a few remarks. These presently became recognisable as the form of the oath, and it suddenly flashed upon the House that here was Mr. Bradlaugh administering to himself the oath! Even amid the excitement of the moment it was noticed that, with that orderly attention to detail which the member for Northampton has invariably shown in his Parliamentary procedure, he had furnished himself with a copy of the Revised Edition of the New Testament. He had got through the oath, pronounced the "So help me, God," and had bestowed a resonant salute upon the Book, before the House recovered from its petrification. Then it was also seen he had come provided with a piece of paper, and that the stylographic pen, damaged in his famous struggle of last session, was either mended or replaced, for he was rapidly writing his name on the piece of paper. When he had done this he formally tendered the sheet to the Speaker, but being out of reach of the right hon. gentleman, he contented himself with laying it on the box of the First Lord of the Treasury.

In the meantime the Speaker was on his feet. Sir Erskine May had left his chair, and advanced half-way to meet Mr. Bradlaugh, who, he supposed, was going to ask for the oath in the ordinary fashion; and Sir Stafford Northcote had risen to his feet, though apparently without any clear view of his duties in the crisis, for he forthwith sat down without saying a word. The Speaker, reminding Mr. Bradlaugh of the resolution passed the other day, directed him to withdraw below the Bar. Mr. Bradlaugh, who had had the advantage of rehearsing the scene, and was ready for every turn, promptly obeyed, announcing that he would withdraw below the Bar, but would thereafter take his seat. This he did, passing by the gangway, under the shadow of the gallery, and seating himself on a back bench, to the manifest horror of Earl Percy. The Speaker thereupon solemnly charged him with disobeying his orders. Mr. Bradlaugh blandly

explained that he had obeyed them to the letter, having withdrawn below the Bar, and had thereafter taken his seat, having now subscribed the oath. However, as the Speaker insisted, he withdrew to the seat below the gallery.

Lord Randolph Churchill was the first to recover his self-possession, and presently moved that Mr. Bradlaugh, having taken his seat without having taken the oath, "is as dead"—a way of putting it received with some laughter, since Mr. Bradlaugh was plainly on view under the gallery, where he sat with folded arms and triumphant expression. The Attorney-General pointed out that the statute required that a member, to bring himself within its penalties, must either have voted, or sat during a debate. Sir Henry James would express no opinion as to the legality of Mr. Bradlaugh's way of taking the oath (a dry, judicial way of looking at the question which elicited a groan of horror from the Opposition), but was clear he had not sat during any debate. He therefore suggested that some interval should be taken for considering the question before the House proceeded to a decision. This course was approved by Mr. Gladstone, who moved the adjournment of the debate.

Feb. 24.—A silent member. We have had Mr. Metge among us for some time now, and amid all the wealth of language flowing from the benches where he sits, he has been honourably distinguished by a disposition to be silent. There was a memorable occasion on which it was necessary that the most modest tongue should be loosed. When the thirty-seven Irish members were expelled—each sitting with arms folded and brow compressed till his turn came to be touched on the shoulder by the Sergeant-at-Arms, when he rose and went through a brief form of defiance—Mr. Metge found himself suddenly called upon for his maiden speech.

Since that time, up to last week, he has not ventured to address the House. It is a waste of mental and physical power for a man to stand up before a large assembly, and with whatsoever emphatic gesture of the arms, and whatsoever expressive working of the muscles of the face, offer a few remarks if he has no voice. Mr. Metge may well be content to enjoy the remarkable prominence held amongst members for Ireland. For many of them the labour of speech-making is

arranged on quite another plan. Mr. Metge, swayed by great houghts, his soul fired with patriotism, and his mind a storehouse of the literature of many lands, was, when he would speak, refused the service of so humble a member as the tongue. On the other hand, his compatriots, not being embarrassed by the possession of mental machinery of the same order, had but to stand up ; whereupon, as if set in motion by automatic machinery, their voice rattled on with no other limit than physical exhaustion on the part of themselves or their audience.

The circumstances under which Mr. Metge first found his voice, and the House of Commons first heard it, are in themselves not less remarkable than his abstention. It happened one day last week that he had on the paper a question addressed to Mr. Forster, and containing a reference to the private history of one of the active patriots in Ireland, upon whom the police had cast an eye of suspicion. As Mr. Metge was observed to stand up when the motion was called on, and a moment later silently resume his seat, it was understood that the question had been put, and Mr. Forster rumbled forth his answer, in which he traced in detail the recent career of this interesting patriot, and concluded by the statement that "he had since gone to America." This allegation had the most surprising and unlooked-for effect. Mr. Forster had played the part of the Fairy Prince in the Sleeping Palace.

"A fairy Prince with joyful eyes,  
And lighter-footed than the fox,"

he had incidentally and unwittingly touched the hidden spring, and, with some premonitory buzzing and whirring of rusty machinery, Mr. Metge's voice was, for the first time, heard in the House of Commons.

"It is a very curious thing," he said, with his head slightly on one side, his hand outstretched to call attention to the point, and his face mantled over with grave thought—"It is a very curious thing that his mother don't know this."

The House, first startled at the unwonted sound, burst into a roar of laughter that lasted several moments. Mr. Metge had made his maiden speech. It had been a tremendous success, and it was fondly thought that, the spell being once broken, the House of Commons might enjoy the advantage of his articulate

counsel and profound remarks on current politics. Nor was this expectation disappointed.

When to-night the debate on the maintenance of roads went off, a debate on the wrongs of Ireland came on, and Mr. Metge worthily took his part in it. The well of language once tapped flows readily enough, though still his gestures, having the advantage of longer practice in the House, formed not the least convincing portion of his oration to-night. He had armed himself with a copy of the Orders, which he had tightly rolled in the form of a *bâton*. Through the first half of his speech he fiercely shook this at Mr. Forster, varying the action during the latter half by literally smiting himself hip and thigh, as if he were an Amalekite.

Mar. 3.—Mr. Healy in gentle mood. Mr. Healy, since his return from foreign parts, has displayed something of the culture that comes of travel. It is true that of late he has gone back to that remarkable coat, which is a compromise between a sack and a surtout. But that might well be placed to his credit as proof of faithfulness to old friends. When he put off the smarter garment, which on his first appearance after his return caused Mr. Biggar to eye him with grave suspicion, he did not cast off the more polished manner, of which it was the outward and visible sign. His deference to the wishes of other people has reached such a point that, as he said to-night, he did not care two rows of pins whether he was in gaol or the House of Commons; and the House, not to be outdone in politeness, refrained from expressing a preference. Some hours later he overwhelmed Lord Frederick Cavendish with compliments, causing that amiable nobleman to twist his extended legs with an energy and an ingenuity that gave birth to grave doubt as to whether they might ever again be disentangled. It is quite true that Mr. Healy at the same time managed to say some discreditable things of the absent Chief Secretary, and to knock together the heads of the two Irish law officers as they sat side by side on the bench, watching with natural concern the contortions undergone by Lord Frederick. Some people might say that Mr. Healy mounted on the shoulders of the Secretary to the Treasury in order the better to strike at Mr. Forster. It is sufficient for the candid mind to re-

cognise the gracefulness of the compliment and the advantages of travel.

The House of Commons has always found Mr. Healy an interesting person—from his earlier manner, when, as we have seen, with a hand thrust in either trouser-pocket, with drooping neck and scowling face, he was wont to proclaim the hatred of the Irish peasant for the English Parliament, down to the present day, when, having taken on some of the polish which the company of gentlemen bestows on the most unpromising material, he glibly talks about his “hon. friend” and “the noble lord” and “the right hon. gentleman.” There has been about him a certain downrightness, a thoroughness, and an audacious indifference to venerated authority, which, in their way, have been sublime.

“A Waterloo-  
House-young-  
man.”

The case is very different with Mr. Arthur O’Connor. He is essentially “a Waterloo-

House-young-man,” and when he rises (as he often does) with smooth manner, and head persuasively drooped on one side, one instinctively expects to hear the inquiry as to “what’s the next article?” To-night he presented himself, and insisted upon being straightway led out for trial. “Was there a warrant against him? and if so, what was the invoice number? Let the law officers of the Crown lay it on the counter, and state the day of delivery. Also, whether they were prepared to supply, or had supplied, two as per sample, one specially designed for the Irish trade and the other for the English.” Of course that is not quite the way in which Mr. O’Connor put his plea. The emendations were suggested as he proceeded with his mock heroics, and his indignant demand that he should be sacrificed for unhappy Ireland. When he protested that he was not only willing, but anxious to submit himself for trial anywhere, members below the gangway opposite, who sometimes have an inconveniently practical way of looking at matters, audibly suggested that he might have his heart’s desire by the simple procedure of visiting Ireland. Mr. O’Connor shrewdly ignored this interruption, and went on to declaim against the Government that would not put the law in action against him.

It is sad to think of the possibility of there being any community among which these flash heroics will pass as genuine

coin. It was remembered in the House of Commons to-night that there was a time when Mr. O'Connor had at hand a full opportunity of gratifying his ambition. He was in Dublin when the raid was made on the leaders of the Land League, and if he had remained there for a few hours the burning desire of his soul would have been accomplished. But, as history has recorded, he quitted his native shores for his adopted country, availing himself of the seclusion afforded by the state cabin of a collier. That is a recollection that makes a little ludicrous this posturing on the floor of the House as a man whom a tyrannical Government will not even gratify by arrest. It brings into strong relief the kind of courage that is required to defy authority and heap coarse abuse on Ministers of the Crown from behind the impregnable barrier of the privilege of a Member of Parliament. Mr. Arthur O'Connor, brushing the coal-dust off his clothes, and parading from a seat in Parliament his readiness to meet the consequences of his connection with an illegal association, is like a man standing in safety on Dover Pier and speaking disrespectfully of the ocean because it has "neither the courage nor the manliness" to drown him.

Mar. 10.—Lord Emlyn, with his elbow resting on the back Emlyn speaks. of the bench, and his head upon his hand, moodily looked in the direction where Mr. Biggar stood, talking at large on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. But there was no speculation in his eye, and his thoughts were evidently far away. The only other occupant of the bench was Mr. Warton, who had more than once tried to break through the engrossing nature of the young nobleman's thoughts by proffer of the snuff-box. But Lord Emlyn would have none of it. Perhaps he had been present one night last week when the House of Commons had been shaken to its foundation by three thunderous sneezes. All eyes were turned in the direction whence the noise came, and beheld Mr. Dodds in a paroxysm preceding a fourth explosion. In the shadow of the gallery, stealing away with stealthy stride and guilty look, was the member for Bridport. He had been round by the back of the Speaker's chair, and, engaging the respected member for Stockton in conversation, had inveigled him into taking a pinch of his snuff, with a result that lent a tender personal interest to

Mr. Dodd's subsequent remarks in support of the second reading of the Boiler Explosions Bill. Whether Mr. Warton keeps two snuff-boxes, one for the Liberal party, and one for the refection of his political friends, might be a subject of Parliamentary inquiry. But surely so stout a friend of Church and State as Lord Emlyn might with impunity have dipped into the snuff-box. But he turned his back on Mr. Warton, and would have none of his blandishments.

It must in truth have been a great matter that occupied Lord Emlyn's mind, since he could not turn aside a moment to dally with a snuff-box. But the time had not yet come for its disclosure. No one could say at what hour it would strike, and in the meantime, as the House could plainly see, Lord Emlyn was ready. His hat was planted out with papers, as if it were a celery bed. Books borrowed from the library buttressed him on either side; and there, with his back turned to the bewildered member for Bridport, he sat, and listened to the varied questions which the House discussed in preference to buckling to its business. He heard Mr. Stanley Leighton's stirring denunciation of the way in which lists are prepared in relation to dormant funds in Chancery. He listened to Mr. Blennerhassett's gentle eloquence, as he pleaded with the State to buy Irish railways. He heard Mr. Gray's querulous voice, and, unless he listened closely, would have thought that he was quarrelling with Mr. Blennerhassett, whereas he was quite agreeing with him. Mr. Gladstone came in, fresh from the charms of opera, with the sweeter music of the people's cheering ringing in his ears, and a red flower in his button-hole. Mr. Evelyn Ashley had commenced a long speech, delivered on behalf of the Government, by showing in a sentence how hopeless was Mr. Blennerhassett's cause. Then, with a manifest pleasure not wholly shared by the scanty audience, he had devoted himself to prove in a hundred ways the truism with which he had started. It might have been thought this was enough, not to say too much. But as we have plenty of time on our hands in Parliament, and nothing particular to do, Mr. Gladstone stated over again, in crisper form, what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade had elaborately proved. Then Mr. Callan and Mr. Biggar genially discussed the subject. Then there was a pause, and then, amid a cheer from Mr. David Davies, Lord Emlyn,

gloomily passing his hand over his brow, arose and faced the expectant House.

Considering the long preparation, and the state of excitement into which the House had been worked, it might reasonably complain of a little ambiguity in the matter now it was being explained. It was quite clear to Mr. David Davies, who for the previous hour had been excitedly moving about, trying various benches, as if he were prospecting for a lime rock, and leaving them one after another, as if each turned out to be mud or gravel. Also it was plain that Mr. Sclater-Booth, who providentially awoke from deep sleep as Lord Emlyn resumed his seat, was in the secret. That Mr. Peter Rylands knew all about it is, of course, no marvel; there are few things that escape his eagle eye. Mr. Duckham, who had also been behind the scenes, now came forward in an attitude of utter depression, with his hands folded before him, his head on one side, and in melancholy voice descanted on the situation. Moreover (and this forms a really valuable clue to the mystery), Mr. Dodson had evidently been doing something, or leaving something undone. It was no use his getting down towards the end of the Treasury bench, crossing his knees, folding his arms, and attempting to look unconcerned. Lord Emlyn had reserved for him the deepest tones of his voice. Mr. Sclater-Booth pointed direct at him, and Mr. Peter Rylands, with natural chivalry, took him under his protection, and pointedly referred to him as "my right honourable friend."

One thing was clear from Lord Emlyn's angry denunciation and scathing rebuke. Something had gone wrong with the roads in South Wales, and apparently Mr. Dodson had brought in, or promised to bring in, a Bill dealing with the grievance. This appeared from Lord Emlyn's declaration that he "was not inclined to oppose the Bill if it came anything within the boundaries of common sense." That that was not probable, however, was clear from the withering glance he bestowed upon the unhappy President of the Local Government Board. Another objection he urged with great force, was against its being "scrambled through both Houses of Parliament;" and particularly that this should be done "in fourteen days," a phrase Lord Emlyn repeated with choleric emphasis, as if, in his capacity as a magistrate in Caermarthenshire, he were sentencing Mr.

Dodson to that specific term of imprisonment. Whatever was the matter, it must have been of serious import, for nothing that followed would pacify Lord Emlyn, or remove from his brow the deepening cloud. Mr. Davies offered to pay somebody's salary himself. Mr. Selater-Booth was soothing in his tone ; Mr. Duckham sympathetic ; Mr. Rylands friendly ; Mr. Dodson apologetic. Lord Emlyn refused to be comforted, and with his hands set defiantly upon his hips, and a fine smile of scorn upon his countenance, he listened to the discussion that followed his speech, only once, whilst Mr. Dodson was speaking, interposing the familiar remark, "Fourteen days."

Mar. 15.—A proposal in the interests of public business.

When the House of Commons settles down to consider methods of improving its procedure, it is to be hoped it will not omit to take note of two simple expedients for advancing business.

One is the judicious withdrawal of Mr. Gladstone at particular epochs, and the other the peremptory removal upon occasion of Mr. Forster. In this respect, for obvious reasons, Mr. Gladstone incurs the greater measure of responsibility. Mr. Forster's capacity for producing talk is limited to the subject of Ireland, and, though the ingenuity of the Irish members makes that a marvellously elastic boundary, there is at least some limit. The universal genius of the Premier, his vast responsibility, and his many-sided sympathies, supply so many points of attack. It is impossible to conceive any subject brought under notice of the House with which, in case of wrong-doing, Mr. Chaplin, for example, could not personally associate the Premier. This would not greatly matter from the point of view immediately under consideration, if Mr. Gladstone were gifted with that far-away look which was amongst not the least useful personal qualifications Mr. Disraeli displayed as a leader of the House of Commons. There were few more impressive or eloquent things done by the late Conservative chief than the look which stole over his face when Mr. Bentinck, familiarly known as Big Ben, was discussing him. Mr. Bentinck was rather a lumbering adversary, and what he chanced to be saying was of the least possible consequence in the little comedy. The point of interest was the immobile figure on the Treasury bench, with arms folded, knees crossed, lips slightly parted, and eyes steadily fixed

on the infinites of space. There was no ostentatious affectation of being busied with other matters ; no writing letters, with one ear open to what was going on ; no engaging in animated conversation with a colleague. There was not even an appearance, real or affected, of indifference to the hon. member's remarks. Mr. Disraeli simply didn't hear him, didn't see him, was not aware of his existence.

This sort of thing is exceedingly depressing to a gentleman who has undertaken the task of irritation. There is no man in the House who with greater deliberation, or with fuller evidence of malice prepense, sets to work to "draw old Gladstone," as the phrase goes among the cheerful youth of the Opposition, than the Member for Chatham, and he nearly always succeeds in his object. But those who are familiar with the process, and well acquainted with Mr. Disraeli, well know that Mr. Gorst's elaborate insinuations would have had no more effect upon him than if they had been spoken in his absence. The immediate consequence of this would, of course, have been that Mr. Gorst would have either shortened his speech, or refrained from making it, and so much time would have been saved for the business of the nation. Lord Hartington, among other conspicuous qualifications as a successful leader of the House, possesses in high measure this great gift of imperturbability. The only man who now tries to "draw" Lord Hartington is Mr. Biggar, and some deficiency in perception prevents that gentleman from recognising the hopelessness of the task. In course of time the truth will permeate his mind also, and with Lord Hartington in charge the transaction of business will take the place of the bandying of personalities.

Some one once said of Mr. Gladstone, "He would be a great man if he could only occasionally sit still." This remark applies with peculiar force in his character of leader of the House of Commons. For the successful progress of business the thing most earnestly to be deprecated is friction. Yet friction is a quality which Mr. Gladstone is positively certain to contribute to any debate at which he may chance to be present. He does it in least measure when he formally takes part in a debate. He very rarely loses possession of his presence of mind and sense of responsibility when he stands at the table of the House. He may a moment ago have been sitting on the Treasury bench,

fuming and fretting in a white heat of passion, and may have been throwing oil on the flames by interjecting remarks, or making undignified gestures. His very springing up may have been on the impulse of apparently uncontrollable passion. But the moment he is on his feet he resumes command over himself, and though he may say bitter things, they are at least uttered in well-balanced sentences, and with full proof that the speaker is under his own control. It is when he is reclining on the Treasury bench, an eager listener to debate, that Mr. Gladstone excites the marvel of those who call to mind his long experience and transcendent capacity. In such circumstances the most ignorant and least important member of the House can attract his attention and bring about his interposition. Mr. Callan can do this, and, having learnt his power, frequently exercises it. What Mr. Callan says is, of course, no matter ; but the lightest word spoken by the Premier is listened for by the world. His utterance cannot be disregarded, and his contribution of an observation, however trifling, often gives a new turn to debate, or brings in fresh contributors who continue it for hours after it might have died away but for the fateful and wholly unnecessary interposition of the Premier.

But it does not need that Mr. Gladstone should say anything in order to contribute to the prolongation of those "conversations," which are at the root of our Parliamentary evils. It is sufficient if he is there and shows that he is listening for members of a certain class to indulge in speech-making. If one remark does not "draw" him another may, and, failing that, there are others in reserve that may be lavishly poured out. What took place on Tuesday morning forms a striking example of the unfortunate influence which the personal impressionability of the Premier exercises upon Parliamentary affairs. It was, regarded from a dramatic point of view, a fine and moving spectacle when, at last, Lord Percy and his friends succeeded in making the Lion roar. They had been poking at the cage fully an hour, and had drawn forth nothing more pleasing or exciting than some vigorous shaking of the head and one or two mono-syllabic ejaculations. Mr. Gladstone was evidently conscious of the undesirability of yielding to temptation. He might easily crush these young men, but at what expense ! The whole of a night had been already wasted. It was early morning when

the Minister for War had found an opportunity of rising and making his statement explanatory of the Estimates. It was absolutely necessary that certain votes should be taken before the House adjourned. Every one, except Mr. Gladstone, was weary with the long sitting, and worn out with watching for the coming of the Chairman of Committees. Now the House had got into Committee of Supply, and business might, in whatever halting fashion, have gone forward. It was Mr. Childers's affair ; let him manage it.

These thoughts were evidently present in Mr. Gladstone's mind, and, fleeing from temptation, he vacated his usual seat by the despatch box. If he had gone a little further, left the House altogether, and gone home to bed, it would have been better for himself and public business too. He was like a man conscious of his own weakness in the face of drink, but who could not make up his mind totally to abstain. He went on the temperance principle, and instead of leaving the House altogether, took up his seat at the lower end of the Treasury bench under the shadow of the Speaker's chair. But this required only a little lengthening of the arm on the part of his pursuers, and presently they succeeded in drawing him. Since the night when in Opposition he suddenly turned and rebuked Mr. Chaplin, who had gone a pace too far, nothing has been finer in its way than his discomfiture of Lord Percy on Tuesday morning. The spare figure, trembling with indignation, bending forward as if preparing for a spring, the flashing eyes, the extended hand, and the ringing voice, combined to form an effective scene, the like of which no other stage in the world could parallel. It was magnificent, but it was not business.

Mr. Forster. Mr. Forster sins against the progress of public business only in less degree, since public business just now is almost exclusively Irish. Moreover, he supplies no compensation in the way of intellectual or dramatic feasts. To-night the advance to Committee of Supply on the Navy Estimates was barred by the Irish members for some hours, whereas in the absence of Mr. Forster they would not have been able to keep up the game for more than fifty minutes. No man, however fond of archery, would be inclined to spend his evenings in shooting away at no visible object. Mr. Forster's massive

figure spread about the Treasury bench supplies a target which even blundering wit and Mr. Biggar cannot miss, and as long as he stays to listen they will talk. Of course, the presence of the Minister is necessary in the event of serious questions being raised affecting the department of which he is head. To-night the principal question was why Mr. Forster, when about to make a speech, had sent notice of his intention to a particular Dublin newspaper, omitting the notice to the disadvantage of another in which a member of the Land League is pecuniarily interested. Mr. Forster having fully dealt with this important matter at question time, might well have absented himself when it was renewed later in the evening. He took another view of his duty, and obligingly set up the visible target, at which the Irish members joyfully discharged their puny yet venomous darts.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### MR. FORSTER'S RESIGNATION.

Mr. Tom Collins wronged—The Division on the Closure Resolution—Living near the Rose—Major Nolan “wants to know”—Mr. Forster and the Irish Members—Mr. Forster resigns—In the Lords—Back to the Commons—Mr. Forster explains.

Mar. 24.—Mr. Tom Collins wronged. Mr. Collins begged the indulgence of the House whilst he made a personal statement. The hon. member told a sad story of the results of practical joking. It appears that, in consequence of Sir Wilfrid Lawson's proposal prior to Mr. Collins' taking his seat to question him as to his religious convictions, a notion had got abroad that he was of atheistic tendencies. He had received many letters on the subject. A resolution had been passed at a meeting at Manchester denouncing the Conservatives as hypocritical for persecuting Mr. Bradlaugh whilst Mr. Tom Collins, who held the same views, was in their midst; and a petition had been forwarded to him on behalf of Mr. Bradlaugh with a request that he would present it. Mr. Collins himself was not

unaffected by these circumstances, but he felt most deeply for the noble lord and the right hon. gentleman who had introduced him, and to whom these circumstances must give trouble. The House was apparently in no mood for sympathy, but laughed heartily throughout the narrative, on which no other comment was made.

Mar. 30. — The  
division on the  
Closure reso-  
lution.

It was a very remarkable gathering that sat or stood about the benches on either side as the tellers, Lord Richard Grosvenor on the right, Mr. Cowen on the left, paused for a moment before proclaiming the figures. It is a long time since so many men were gathered at one time within the walls of the House of Commons. Some present during the night had not been seen for weeks or months. Mr. Newdegate, whose references to his Parliamentary age grow more frequent and more solemn, must have felt quite youthful amongst some of those whom the imperative whip had gathered for the fray. Amongst the throng was the tall, spare figure of Sir Rainald Knightley, rarely seen now. Mr. Villiers, who was in Parliament when Queen Victoria was a school-girl, was present during the early part of the sitting, looking as hale and hearty as if he had never had a monument erected to him. Mr. Bass, though older than the century, had nerved himself to join in the division. Suddenly catching sight of him, the Premier, whilst Sir Stafford Northcote was speaking, left the Treasury bench and walked down the House to where the member for Derby sat, and shook hands with him. Thus Youth and Age met, and, disregarding the ceremonious space that lies between a private member and a Prime Minister, the youthful leader went to welcome the veteran follower. Here was Mr. Baxter safe home from India's coral strand, whence it is said he escaped in a small boat, disguised as an ayah, fleeing from the frown of the terrible Governor of Madras, who but yesterday represented the Elgin Burghs. Here was Mr. Errington, withdrawn from the gentle embraces of spring in the Campagna, and handed over to the eager and ruthless hands of Sir Henry Wolff. Mr. Sykes, bravely bearing a pricked thumb in silken sling, had risen from his couch to support his party. Here was the Lord Mayor of Dublin, having deigned to set aside the state and dignity of his position, and

become for the nonce plain Mr. Dawson. And here perhaps the most romantic and touching evidence of political fealty was Sir Sydney Waterlow leaving yesterday's bride in Paris at the bidding of the whip.

It had not, after all, been a very lively evening. Mr. Bright, with the fathomless originality of genius, had managed to represent himself in the new light of "an impartial critic," a man unswayed by passion or prejudice, and who, looking down on the tumult of political warfare, might be trusted to point out the precise bearing of the issue, and to treat it apart from prejudice. Then came a long and dreary interlude, scarcely relieved by the well-considered invective of Mr. Sexton. Sir Stafford Northcote charmed and delighted his friends—that is to say, members in all parts of the House—by the vivacity with which he opened his speech. His chaff of Mr. Dillwyn was excellent, and his dramatic imitation of Mr. Mundella displayed proof of latent powers wholly unsuspected. Mr. Gladstone was too long. After one o'clock in the morning a speech from Demosthenes twenty minutes long would be twice as effectual for its purpose as one that carried the audience on till two. A tendency to shed tears mercifully cut short Mr. Healy's remarks. Then the sweet sound of the bell proclaimed the division. It was a long process, in spite of the fact that the House was more than usually equally divided. The issue was certain, only the precise figures being a matter for speculation. When, at twenty minutes past two, Sir Wm. Harcourt shouldered his way through the throng at the Bar it was clear to read on his beaming face the news of a great victory. He had lingered late round the wicket to bring the news. He was as a dove sent out from the ark of the Treasury bench to see how the land lay, and he brought back to the Patriarch a green leaf, on which was embroidered the words, "For Mr. Marriott's amendment, 279; against, 318."

Apr. 21.—Living near the rose. By the mere accident of sitting on the Conservative benches the Land Leaguers have obtained a subtle aristocratic flavour by no means despicable, and have made personal acquaintances which there is no attempt to conceal. Whilst Lord Randolph Churchill was yet with us he found Mr. Biggar's contiguity convenient for the interchange of

many confidences. The noble lord had discovered in that remarkable man a shrewdness of perception and a geniality of manner which he did not hesitate publicly to recognise. It is true they did not ride in the park together, nor frequent the same clubs. But Lord Randolph always spoke kindly of the member for Cavan, and Mr. Biggar once, without rebuke, alluded to him as "my noble friend." Mr. Healy has even a wider acquaintance amongst polite personages. Lord Folkestone frequently chats with him, and only to-night the glass roof of the House of Commons looked down upon the spectacle of Mr. Healy sitting with negligent grace upon the steps of the gangway, whilst Mr. Cavendish Bentinck bent over him, and read from the same book!

Major Nolan  
"wants to  
know."

In Committee on Civil Service Estimates to-night Major Nolan unexpectedly interposed. He had come in unobserved; or if any one had noticed him they would never have thought he had seed potatoes on his mind. Rising from the front bench below the gangway, and standing well out on the floor so that he might be seen of men, and might the more easily fix Mr. Shaw-Lefevre with his fiery glance, he demanded to be told straightway, "What about seed potatoes?" Mr. Shaw-Lefevre feebly protested that he knew nothing about seed potatoes. But Major Nolan was not to be put off in this way. With rising colour and increasing volubility he insisted upon having the views of Her Majesty's Government on the subject of seed potatoes. Lord Hartington was not present at the moment. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre was in the depths of despair. Lord Frederick Cavendish was tying and untying his legs in knots of the most alarming intricacy. The Committee was roaring with laughter, whilst Major Nolan poised on the edge of the seat, so that he might keep the First Commissioner in range, sat defiantly nodding his head. It was all very well to laugh; let those laugh who win. He was there to know about seed potatoes, and was not to be put off either by convenient ignorance on the Treasury bench or uproarious flippancy in other parts of the House.

At this juncture the Chairman of Committees staved off the growing crisis. Rising with great dignity, and leaning gently but firmly upon the table, he fully faced the infuriate Major, and said :

"The Committee is now discussing a vote of £90,521 for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens. The hon. and gallant gentleman cannot, on this question, introduce the subject of seed potatoes."

Never since revolutions began has the effect of authority, calmly but resolutely wielded, been so triumphant. The clear articulation of the Chairman of Committees, his unflinching figure, and the weight of his official authority, seemed to have the same effect upon the heated chamber as is produced by a jet of cold water shot into a cylinder of steam. The tumult ceased, Major Nolan, with one angry shake of his head to show that, though submissive he was not convinced, threw himself back in his seat, and Mr. Stanley Leighton seized the opportunity to interpose.

Mr. Leighton had had a very bad quarter of an hour some time earlier. He and Mr. Biggar had had a considerable portion of the night to themselves, engaged upon congenial endeavour. Mr. Biggar had found opportunity of offering a few remarks on Mr. Justice Fitzgerald, excited thereto by an effort on the part of the Attorney-General for Ireland to pass on the learned judge what Mr. Biggar took exception to as a "Yewlyjim." Mr. Stanley Leighton had discovered in certain police arrangements made at Hawarden Castle an opportunity of saying a few things about Mr. Gladstone. Of the two Mr. Biggar had fared better. He had been supported by the cheers of three or four of his compatriots, and, in spite of a slight warning from the Speaker, had managed to get out his story of "my friend" and Mr. Justice Fitzgerald, Mr. Biggar's "friend" being in the dock, and the judge on the bench. But Mr. Stanley Leighton had been conspicuously left in the lurch by his own party. Only Mr. Montague Scott remained to support him, whilst Sir William Harcourt playfully tossed him, to the undisguised merriment of the throng in the strangers' gallery. He sat gloomy among the company, till suddenly he discovered an opportunity of returning to the attack on Mr. Gladstone. Just as he was getting on nicely some member opposite rose to a point of order, and he was ruled down.

Then the discussion wandered to the trees in Kensington Park, the right of cabs to pass through Hyde Park, and the desirability of Sunday-afternoon boating in Battersea Park.

Major Nolan and seed potatoes were forgotten. But the Major is not the kind of man to accept defeat. Whilst the Committee was, as it were, wandering under the trees at Kensington Park, a sharp angry voice rang above the chatter, and there, with his back against the cross benches, his feet planted well apart, and the light of battle in his eye, stood Major Nolan, wanting to know about seed potatoes! It was evident the Major was not to be trifled with, and Lord Frederick Cavendish, trembling in every limb, gave the assurance that, amid the multifarious interests that press upon a Ministry charged with the cares of an empire on which the sun never sets, seed potatoes should not be forgotten. Then, but not till then, Major Nolan limbered up his guns, withdrew from his commanding position, and the Committee proceeded to discuss the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens.

Apr. 28. — Mr.  
Forster and  
the Irish mem-  
bers.

Of the two score questions on the paper more than half were put by Irish members, and were addressed to the Chief Secretary. It is part of the organised campaign of the Land League members to worry Mr. Forster with questions. Many of these relate to trivial matters, and all present a great superstructure of exaggeration, built upon an insignificant substratum of fact. Mr. Forster is, unfortunately, deficient in the qualities that would make it possible for a Minister to meet tactics like these. The baiting of the Chief Secretary in the House of Commons by the Irish members is the nearest approach permitted by public opinion in this country to the bull fights of Madrid. There is the same agonised blundering here and there by the object of attack, and the same perfect command of the situation by the Parliamentary banderilleros and picadors. Sometimes Mr. Forster, reaching the limits of human patience, breaks out in righteous wrath and gores his assailants. Whereupon the Land Leaguers indignantly denounce him, and plaintively appeal to the Speaker to protect them. Oftener, as happened to-night, he affects indifference, and, like much else that he does in connection with Ireland, does it very badly. He had brought down in his despatch-box a bundle of sheets of foolscap with the question pasted on the top, and the conscientious answer laboriously written beneath. One by one, as the questions were put, he read his answers. The slightest admission of the substratum of fact was greeted with triumphant

yells by the Land Leaguers; whilst any attempt to topple over the superstructure of fable or exaggeration was baffled by rude interruption. Since the Speaker did not interfere, it must be taken for granted that this demonstration did not go beyond the bounds of Parliamentary decorum. It certainly exceeded all notion of fair play, not to mention the canons of commonest courtesy.

Not the least significant feature in the incident was the solitariness that surrounded the struggling Minister. Not a cry from the Liberal benches cheered him in his difficulty. Not one of his colleagues rose to ask the Speaker whether this constant interruption, these snarling cries, and this insolent laughter formed a breach of Parliamentary order. With his head down and his shoulders squared, Mr. Forster faced again and again the little mob below the gangway opposite, who sat and gloated over his personal discomfort and his political discomfiture. This must be one of the hardest things for Mr. Forster to bear in his present season of tribulation. As compared with Jonah, his treatment by those who sail in the same ship with him is exceedingly hard. Jonah, up to the very moment when he was handed over the gunwale, was courteously treated. His convenience was consulted in every way, and even when he himself, having had put to him the question what should be done, answered, "Take me up and cast me forth into the sea," his shipmates gallantly bent again to the oars, determined that, if this thing must come, it should not be till all else had failed. There is nothing of this character in the attitude of Mr. Forster's shipmates. And yet he has been but the instrument of the policy framed in the Cabinet and adopted by overwhelming majorities by the Liberal party in the House of Commons.

This open desertion of a comrade has a more disastrous effect upon the *morale* of the House of Commons than anything else that could be done. It was one of the characteristics that endeared Lord Palmerston to the nation that he stuck to a colleague whether he was right or wrong. Whichever be the case with Mr. Forster, he has done right or wrong in company with his colleagues and his party, and when the House of Commons has presented to it a spectacle such as that witnessed between five and six o'clock to-night, it is no wonder that it

should develop the characteristics that just now distinguish it. What the House of Commons likes to feel is the light guidance of a strong hand, or at least the consciousness that it is being led in some particular direction to some well-understood goal. At present it has not even a reliable finger-post, and, amid the gathering discontent and disgust, respectability and repute retire into the background, and Mr. Callan comes to the fore.

May 3.—Mr. Forster resigns. At half-past three o'clock this afternoon the House of Commons was very quiet, presenting no sign to the casual observer of a political crisis. Mr. Clarke was discussing at some length the desirability of issuing a new writ for Wigan. The benches were half empty; the only one having any pretensions to being full was that where the chiefs of the Opposition sat. It was noteworthy that on the Treasury bench there were no Cabinet Ministers. The Attorney-General, having made his speech against the issue of the writ, sat in the place of the leader, looking as if he were thinking of anything rather than the admirable arguments adduced by Mr. Clarke. About this time Mr. Forster entered. He usually takes his seat towards the end of the Treasury bench near the gangway, so as to have at hand the table on which to lay his voluminous manuscripts containing answers to questions from Mr. Healy and Mr. Sexton. This afternoon he seated himself at the lower end of the Treasury bench, under the shadow of the Chair. He had brought his hat with him, and evidently did not mean to stay very long. As he sat there Mr. Gladstone hurriedly entered, and taking up Mr. Forster's hat from the seat nursed it whilst he earnestly conversed with him. This conversation lasted a few moments, and Mr. Forster left the House. The Premier then moving up the bench to his own seat seemed as if he were about to take part in the debate. But he only wished to catch the eye of Sir John Hay, which accomplished he signalled the right hon. gentleman to a conference at the back of the Speaker's chair.

These signs were watched with quickening interest by the House, and when Sir John Hay came back it was known that Mr. Gladstone, instead of waiting till after nine o'clock, would make the promised statement between six and seven, or earlier, if the debate on the Wigan writ were got through. There was

now displayed a remarkable concentration of desire in the direction of shortening the argument on this question. Previously Conservative members—perhaps not without some reference to the fact that the real business of the afternoon was the discussion of the Procedure rules—lingered over the history of Wigan with touching concern. Now Wigan was left to take care of itself, and, as soon as it could conveniently be done, the debate was shut up.

*In the Lords.* In the meantime the Lords' sitting had commenced, and as Mr. Gladstone could not possibly speak before the Wigan debate was wound up, members rushed off to the Lords in quest of news. At half-past four, after some mysterious whispering and muttering, understood to be connected with private business, Lord Salisbury approached the table, and bending across it put to Lord Granville the comparatively small quantity of questions on the political situation he had reduced to writing. At this time there was a fair attendance of peers, but, as usual on occasions like this, it was the Commons who showed most openly the vulgar passion of interest in public affairs. The occupants of the front Opposition bench had turned out to a man, as if they were about to vote against the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. W. H. Smith had the centre place on the steps of the Throne, reserved for Privy Councillors and the eldest sons of peers, though he made several amiable attempts to share it with Lord Folkestone. Sir Stafford Northcote was hustled a little on one side, whilst well in front stood Sir Richard Cross, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Raikes, and Lord Sandon. Mr. Goschen presently arrived, and the last cubic foot of room was appropriated by Sir William Harcourt, the solitary Minister in this part of the House. At the Bar and in the galleries on either side members of the House of Commons stood or sat, the Irish members showing well in the front.

Lord Granville, after a few preliminary observations, plumped out the information that Mr. Forster had resigned. That this, if not a surprise, was a secret well kept was attested by the audible movement of interest and excitement which followed. Without making too many words of it the leader of the House announced in succession the release of

the Parliamentary suspects, the preparation of a Bill dealing with arrears and with the Bright clauses in the Land Act, the determination at present not to ask for the renewal of the Coercion Bill, and the preparation of a Bill attempting to deal with outrages by strengthening the condition of the common law. Lord Salisbury and, as far as could be judged, the rest of the peers received this startling succession of news with bland imperturbability. A few questions were asked and the subject dropped, members of the House of Commons rushing back to their own places in great fear lest they might have lost Mr. Gladstone's speech.

Back to the Commons. When they arrived at the gates of the lobby they found themselves locked out, the few members who remained behind being engaged in dividing on the Wigan writ. At five o'clock when Mr. Gladstone rose the House presented a crowded and animated appearance. Members were still pouring in from the lobbies, peers were tumbling over each other on the stairs in their haste to secure a full share of the limited accommodation of their gallery. The Marquis of Salisbury was already seated, and was regarding with interest the gathering throng on the floor below. The Duke of Cambridge struggled through the crowd on the top of the stairs, whose courtesy was greatly tried by what at the outset appeared the physical impossibility of passing the Duke between a portly peer and the wall. Every seat on the floor was occupied, and members stood up in scores in the galleries that flank the House. In addition there was a great crowd at the Bar. Where all these members came from, suddenly springing up at the right moment, is a matter of surprise. They certainly had not been in the House during the debate on the Wigan writ.

Mr. Gladstone followed the chief points of the statement made in the other House by Earl Granville. He made only a passing allusion, however, to the question of arrears and the Bright clauses, not speaking of the measure which Lord Granville mentioned as being in preparation. The announcement that the three members are to be released forthwith, and that the list of prisoners would be examined with the object of releasing all persons who are not believed to be associated with the commission of crime was received in dead silence by the Irish

members, and with a cheer from the Liberals below the gangway. The allegation that the prisoners would be released in the belief that the step would promote and maintain law and order in Ireland was echoed by some jeers from the Conservative benches answered by loud cheers from the Liberals. The Premier's frank way of putting Mr. Forster's resignation on the ground that "he declined to share our responsibility" in this matter was a signal for loud and prolonged cheering from the Conservatives. This was repeated from both sides of the House when the Premier paid a tribute to the unwearied diligence, the marked ability, and the unfailing patriotism with which Mr. Forster had performed his duties.

May 4. — Mr. Forster arrived early, entering from the Forster explains. doorway under the clock, and walking down the House took the corner seat behind the Treasury bench. At ten minutes past five he rose and was greeted with cheers from the Liberal benches, which were enthusiastically taken up from the Conservative side. At this moment the House was crowded in every part. Just before Mr. Forster rose the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Teck took their seats among the peers. He had got through the introduction of his speech, and was stating the reasons why the three members had been arrested, when Mr. Parnell pushed his way through the throng at the Bar, and, advancing up the House, was hailed with a cheer from the members of his party. Mr. Forster observed that, while he could not recommend the release of the hon. member, he was glad to see him sitting opposite, as he would have occasion to allude to him. The members were, he continued, arrested because they had carried intimidation of the Queen's subjects to a point at which no Government could exist except in name. He would have been glad to release them, and have done so as soon as he could have obtained security that the law of the land should no longer be set at nought and trampled under foot.

Going more into detail, he mentioned three conditions which in his opinion should have preceded their release—first, a public promise on their part not to set up their will against the law of the land. No such promise had been given; and Mr. Forster, amid wild cheering from the Conservatives, entreated his late

colleagues not to rest upon any secret understanding with the Land Leaguers, and not to try and bribe them into obedience to the law by concessions. The second condition was that Ireland should be quiet—a condition not yet arrived at, though Mr. Forster claimed for his administration that great improvement had been effected in Ireland. Boycotting had been stopped, the Land League had been defeated, and its members were obliged to hide under the petticoats of the ladies, to fly to Paris, or to seek the sanctuary of that House. Secret societies still existed, but there was one thing worse than secret societies, and that was the paying of blackmail to law-breakers. In his opinion, since the battle was begun between law and lawlessness, there never had been a time when it was more dangerous to relax the hold of the Executive, a sentiment loudly cheered from the Conservative benches. The third condition was the passing of "a fresh Act." The right hon. gentleman received a fresh award of Conservative cheers by observing that if other people knew as much of Ireland as he did they would feel that this Irish matter was of more importance even than questions of Procedure. He hoped he might be mistaken in the views he had expressed, but, holding these, how could he as an honest man remain longer a member of the Administration? It was painful for him to leave his colleagues, and above all the Premier, but he could not on his conscience remain.

Mr. Forster spoke for forty minutes, and resumed his seat applauded, as he had been supported through his remarks, by loud cheers from the Conservative side. The Premier's remarks were very early interrupted by Mr. Warton, who interposed with one of his peculiar exclamations. Mr. Gladstone expressed his surprise and regret at this new Parliamentary manner, which he said some day or other would be regretted by those guilty of it. Referring to Mr. Forster's remarks deprecating the paying of blackmail to law-breakers, Mr. Gladstone emphatically concurred, and declared that there was no arrangement of any sort between Mr. Parnell and the Government.

"There had been no arrangement, no bargain, no negotiation. Nothing had been asked, and nothing had been taken."

At the same time the Government had thankfully availed themselves of the opinions and the views of men whose position entitled them to speak for the people of Ireland, and upon

information tendered on their behalf they had taken the course lately adopted. But, he added, on Wednesday in last week, when he had made some remarks on the Land Bill promoted by Land League members, that information had not been received. He proceeded to reply in detail to the three points raised by Mr. Forster, but his remarks here, as earlier and later, were interrupted by scandalous and, except in the present Parliament, unprecedented interruptions from Mr. Warton, Sir Henry Tyler, and Mr. Charles Lewis. Mr. Warton distinguished himself above the rest. More than once the Premier stopped and betrayed the effect of these coarse outrages, which remained unrebuked by the gentlemen amongst whom the members named sat.

Mr. Parnell said the question of the release of himself and friends had not entered into any communication he had made of his views on the state of affairs in Ireland. But he had verbally stated, and he had written his belief, that a settlement of the arrears question would have an enormous effect in restoring law and order in Ireland, it would take away the last excuse for outrages which have taken place—and that if such a settlement were made, he and his friends would be able to take such steps as might have a desirable effect in diminishing these unhappy and lamentable outrages. Mr. Dillon concurred in this view, whilst insisting that he had no communication directly or indirectly with Ministers.

Mr. O'Kelly, fastening himself on Mr. Forster, protested that he had not justified the arrest of the members.

Mr. O'Kelly has been born under peculiar disadvantages. Naturally a man of serious turn of mind, inclined to deep thought in politics, the House of Commons never will take him seriously. In his solemnest moments members roar with laughter. He and John Dillon have been in prison about the same period. They have suffered the same inconvenience and have merited the same guerdon. Why on the night of their return to Parliament should the House listen quietly when Mr. Dillon rises, and why roar with laughter when Mr. O'Kelly, in precisely the same way and with exactly the same purpose, presents himself to their gaze? One reason perhaps, is to be found in the difference of personal appearance. John Dillon really does belong to the Tragic Muse, with his pale

face, his straight black hair, his tall figure, and the grave steadfastness of his countenance. But Mr. O'Kelly was not attuned by nature to this pitch. To-night he looked so provokingly plump, so refreshingly rosy, that the notion of his having lain a martyr for his country in Kilmainham struck the quick sense of the House with irresistible consciousness of incongruity.

Then, the pertinacity with which he fastened himself on Mr. Forster charmed and delighted members. There might be difficulties of State abroad. Government might be in a dilemma. An experiment of momentous national interest might just have been launched. Still, there—right opposite to him, dressed with unusual care—sat the man who had put him (Mr. O'Kelly) in prison. Why had he done so? That was what Mr. O'Kelly wanted to know, and to that end he from time to time slowly rose, and, sternly fixing his eye upon the fluttering form of Mr. Forster, insisted upon having particulars straightway laid before him. It was with the greatest difficulty he was prevented from interposing between Mr. Forster's speech and the statement of the Premier.

"I am one of the persons whom he has held in prison for six months," said Mr. O'Kelly, always with his turbulent eye fixed upon Mr. Forster, and, for greater accuracy, his hand extended in the direction where the right hon. gentleman sat and vainly attempted to hide his emotion.

Mr. O'Kelly seemed to have great faith in this formula of introduction to the notice of the assembly. As a man sits in a thoroughfare with a large placard upon his breast on which is printed "I am blind," or "I had one arm broken and both legs smashed in a colliery explosion," so through the fire and bustle of the night's debate was from time to time heard the slow and solemn utterances, "I am one of the persons whom he has held in prison for six months." At a favourable opportunity Mr. O'Kelly succeeded in informing the House that "any gentleman who knows me knows I would rather have died in prison than have begged the right hon. gentleman to liberate me." This, though conclusive in itself, is only a fragment of what Mr. O'Kelly has to say; and Mr. Forster will not act prudently in supposing that the member for Roscommon is contented with the information already vouchsafed.

Most men would be satisfied with having been six months in prison. Mr. O'Kelly insists upon knowing why he was sent there.

Sir Stafford Northcote, with one eye on Mr. Chamberlain, asked on whose advice the Government had taken the course adopted, and, with the object of eliciting information, moved the adjournment of the House.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE KILMAINHAM TREATY.

The Assassinations in Phoenix Park—Mr. Biggar back from Paris—Sir William Harcourt among the Tombs—Mr. Biggar's melting Mood—The Kilmainham Treaty—More of the Kilmainham Treaty—The new Irish Secretary—The Whigs—Mr. Forster.

May 8.—The assassinations in Phoenix Park.

The House of Commons is turned into a House of Mourning. From an early hour this afternoon members hurried in to secure seats, and there were very few who were not dressed in deep mourning. From the Treasury bench Lord Hartington was the only Minister absent. Mr. Gladstone rose at a quarter-past four, at which time the House was densely crowded, perhaps more so than on any recent occasion, albeit there have been some of stirring interest. The Peers, though their House was still sitting, apparently found the proceedings in the Commons of superior interest, and crowding in filled up all the room in the gallery set apart for them.

The Speaker having called the House to order, the Premier approached the table. He was evidently suffering under feelings of deep emotion, and could scarcely control his voice. In laboured tones, and with a slowness of speech that seemed momentarily to threaten to lapse into silence, he moved the adjournment of the House. Speaking of Mr. Burke, he said that by his death the country was robbed of one of the ablest and most upright, most experienced, and most eminent members of the Civil Service.

“But,” he added, in faltering voice, “the hand of the assassin has come nearer home.”

He found it difficult to speak a word, but he must say (though here, as elsewhere, he avoided naming Lord Frederick Cavendish) that one of the very noblest hearts had ceased to beat, and ceased at the very moment when it had been devoted to the service of Ireland, full of love for that country, full of hope for the future, full of the capacity to render her service. This was not a time to speak on polities, and he would limit his references to giving notice that on Thursday a Bill would be introduced relating to the repression of crime in Ireland. After, and he hoped at an early date, a measure would be introduced dealing with the question of arrears.

The Premier spoke for the space of a few minutes only. His references to Mr. Burke and Lord Frederick Cavendish were accompanied by low sympathetic cheering, which was raised in sharper accents at the latter portion of the speech dealing with political matter. Sir Stafford Northcote added his brief testimony to the prevailing sorrow, and, amid cheers from both sides of the House, assured the Premier of the hearty co-operation of the Opposition in such measures as might appear to be necessary for the restoration and preservation of peace in Ireland.

Mr. Parnell next rose, and it was noticed that, like the rest of the Irish members, he was dressed in mourning. A single cry of "Oh!" greeted his appearance, but it was immediately drowned by an indignant cheer from below the gangway on the Ministerial side. Speaking in a low voice, and with a manner that betrayed profound emotion, Mr. Parnell asked leave to express, on the part of his friends and himself, and he believed on the part of every Irishman throughout the world, his unqualified detestation of the horrible crime committed in Ireland. He believed that the crime had been committed by men who detest the cause with which he had been associated, and who had devised this murder as the deadliest blow in their power to deal at the hopes of the Land League party, and at the new course which the Government had taken.

Mr. Forster, who was received with prolonged cheering from the Conservative benches, in feeling terms, and with signs, occasionally uncontrollable, of the deepest emotion, bore his personal testimony to the high personal qualities and official capacity of Mr. Burke. The poor tenant farmer had lost in him a firm friend, who treated his own tenants well, and who always stood

up for tenants in a place where they think their interests are sometimes forgotten. Mr. Lowther added his personal testimony to Mr. Burke's worth.

May 12.—Mr. Biggar back from Paris.

At the end of a week such as we do not often see, the troubled sea of Parliamentary life has cast up Joseph Gillis Biggar on the back bench below the gangway. The simile is in part suggested by the unusually limp appearance of the member for Cavan. Ordinarily watchful and alert, ready to put his long, lean forefinger upon any shortcoming of the Government, he sat to-night with head resting upon his hand and an unwonted peace brooding about him. It has been noted all the week that Mr. Biggar was not quite himself. There was a certain languidness in his movement, a softening of his eagle glance, and an almost apologetical deference to others, quite foreign to his habit. What was the origin of this, or what its prevailing cause none could say. The influence may have come from within or from without. His heart may have been softened by the policy of conciliation embarked upon by the Government, or his adamantine nature moved by the unaccustomed company of the prisoners from Kilmainham. It is the custom of thoughtless men in the House to regard Mr. Biggar's nature as an implacable one, with no sentiment that may be moved, no heart that can be touched—a patriot who, setting on one side human ties and business occupations, devotes himself to the cause of his country. But this is not the first time casual observers, presumptuously generalising, have fallen into error.

One evidence of this unwonted abstraction is found in the possibility of dispossessing Mr. Biggar of his seat. Hitherto the member for Cavan has illustrated in his person one of the leading axioms of the Land League. He has kept a firm grip of his holding, and woe unto any member who, during his temporary absence, appropriated his seat. Mr. Biggar has relentlessly evicted him, turned him out on the roadside, as it were, even declining, should he subsequently find occasion to leave the House for a few moments, to reinstate him as caretaker.

But during the last week the manifest preoccupation of Mr. Biggar's capacious mind has led to his being forestalled on

several interesting occasions when he might have been counted upon to secure his seat and hold it against all vagrom men. On Thursday night the eye, roving over the crowded benches, would look in vain for the familiar figure of the member for Cavan, with its curiously conveyed impression of being *perched* on the hither end of the third bench below the gangway. He was present, as the House was from time to time reminded by his voice. But he croaked his “Nevermore!” from an obscure corner under the shadow of the gallery. Here he sat, watchful, critical, and scornful, whilst the Home Secretary poured forth his turgid periods.

Sir Wm. Har- For a time Mr. Biggar was drawn out from his court among abstraction, and shone through the debate with the tombs.

his wonted brilliancy of interruption. The manner of the Home Secretary supplied full scope for his pointed humour and his scathing irony. Sir William Harcourt had come to his task of introducing the Crimes Bill, overborne with the weight of his responsibilities. He had laboured diligently at his desk, and in his efforts to reach the height of the occasion had spent his nights and days with Canning and Disraeli. The fruits of his research were manifest to the eyes of the scoffing House. There they lay, half-a-dozen sheets of note paper, each one having written across it a few sentences full of the spontaneity of sympathy, and hot with the sudden rush of righteous anger and honest indignation. The Home Secretary had not only attuned his voice to the occasion but had draped his figure. Every one who has visited Genoa knows the Campo Santo, the cemetery just outside the town, with its long gallery of monumental figures. It is the pleasing Genoese fashion to reverse the ordinary procedure in monumental effigies. When we raise monuments to our dead we, with more or less success, attempt to reproduce the lineaments and figure of those who are gone. In the Campo Santo there is frequently a small medallion representing the departed, and a life-sized figure of the nearest relative in an attitude of profound but attractive dejection. Sir William Harcourt, standing at the table of the House of Commons to-night, irresistibly recalled one of the colossal figures that mourn through the long lengths of the gallery at the Campo Santo. The sincerity of

his grief for the martyrs of Phœnix Park was unquestioned. But he somehow so managed things that the House saw, as it were, on a small medallion carved over the Treasury bench, the familiar features of Lord Frederick Cavendish, whilst here, life size, with bowed head and drooping shoulders, stood his bereaved colleague, Sir William Harcourt.

Mr. Biggar, looking on from the uttermost ends of the House, was quite right in his criticism of Sir William Harcourt's speech and manner. What he had undertaken to do was precisely one of the things in which he conspicuously fails. There is none better than him in his best manner as a light horseman of debate; and none worse when he has to make what he regards in advance as a great speech. Whether it was necessary or desirable after what had passed on Monday night, again to evoke the memory of Lord Frederick Cavendish, and that on the eve of a political debate and a party struggle, is a question of taste. Sir William Harcourt's view of it led him into a disaster, all the more fatal by contrast with the speech to which on Monday night members had listened with wet eyes as Mr. Gladstone spoke. The Prime Minister's few remarks had the dignity and power of simplicity, never so manifest as when displayed in connection with an event that deeply moves the hearts of men. Sir William Harcourt, not less sincere in his regret, overloaded his speech with the trappings of woe, assumed a funereal air and a sepulchral voice, and was very near bringing about the lamentable scandal of an outburst of laughter from the House. The unhappy exordium infested the remainder of his remarks. Having got out of the churchyard he strolled into the hospital, and became so enamoured of the phrases of the dissecting-room that he could scarcely be warned off by the audible titter that ran along the benches or by the shrill mocking cry of Mr. Biggar. Ireland had "a festering sore," also it had "a cancer," both of which had to be cut out and were to be cauterised. With these very pleasing metaphors he was so delighted that he dragged them in wherever it was possible, on some occasions when it seemed impossible. The House, being reminded of Mr. Biggar's presence, longed with a great yearning for some of that estimable man's simplicity and directness of speech wherewith to invest the Home Secretary.

Mr. Biggar's melting mood. But when the excitement of criticism was over, and the Home Secretary had made an end of mourning and miscellaneous surgical operations, Mr. Biggar's prevailing mood of despondency returned. He wandered about restlessly, or reposed on the bench listlessly, with a troubled look in his eyes suggestive of the hunted hare. The sudden revival of his ordinary aggressiveness had faded with the echoes of the Home Secretary's speech. He had not heart to rise and take part in the debate that followed, and only feebly cheered Mr. Healy as that gentleman poured contempt and scorn on a Government that presumed to take Irish ruffians by the throat. To-night this strange transformation was more noticeable than ever. If the gentle hare was being hunted the dogs were evidently near at hand. The diffidence of address, and a certain craving for human sympathy, of which the observer had a curious undefinable consciousness in the manner of Mr. Biggar, became more and more marked. He would not take the seat for which in past times he had so stoutly fought, but would sit anywhere most convenient to members about him. He listened with respectful interest to Sir Herbert Maxwell, as that man of war, radiant in white waistcoat, with a red rose in his button-hole, stood up for the interests of the Army, battling boldly with a civilian Minister. It is seventeen years, Sir Herbert mentioned, since he first carried a sword. He would just miss the Crimean War, but has, doubtless, borne the heat and burden of the day in India, has withstood the shock of the Zulu, and has battled with the Boer. Mr. Biggar took quite a fatherly interest in the still youthful warrior, and cheered him when he advanced the proposition that "something ought to be done." The member for Cavan, it is well known, has no constitutional respect for authority. But, in the new mood that has so mysteriously come upon him, he would insist in addressing Mr. Osborne Morgan as "the Lord-Advocate-General." Judge-Advocate we usually call him, and perhaps a month earlier Mr. Biggar would have left out the Judge, and shortly called him Advocate-General. Now nothing short of Lord-Advocate-General would suit his melting mood.

It was in vain Mr. Biggar attempted to take his usual part in the ordinary business of the evening. This reference to Militia officers, adjutants' wages, territorial designation, and unauthorised

wearing of trews, jarred upon his mind. After awhile he stole gently forth, went into the Library, cast himself down, and in a voice and with a manner that for the moment made the attendant doubt his identity, asked for a book. An hour later a friend found him there musing with a volume on his knee. It was not a Blue-book, nor a copy of "Hansard," over which Mr. Biggar pondered. He had sought relaxation in fiction, and had taken up the "Pickwick Papers." The page was open at the famous scene where Mr. Weller, senior, discusses his domestic relations with his son Sam. Mr. Biggar's finger was at the passage where it is written:

"The elder Weller shook his head as he replied, with a sigh, 'I've done it once too often, Sammy—I've done it once too often.'" \*

May 15. — The Kilmainham Treaty. Mr. Lewis asked a question of Mr. Gladstone which led to a lively scene. He desired to know whether the Premier would produce the documentary evidence of the intentions of the recently imprisoned members with reference to their conduct if released from custody. Mr. Gladstone replied that the documentary evidence consisted of certain letters passing between members of the House. He saw no reason why, if those gentlemen pleased, they should not be produced, though he thought it would be open to objection as tending to diminish the responsibility of the Government. Mr. Parnell then rose and read the letter, written by himself whilst in Kilmainham Prison. It states in effect that in the event of the Government dealing with the question of arrears, and refraining from introducing the Coercion Act, Mr. Parnell and his colleagues would feel themselves in a position to assist in the restraining of agrarian outrages. The letter was dated from Kilmainham on the 28th of April, and addressed to Mr. O'Shea. Lord John Manners asked whether that was the only letter that had been received by the Government, to which Mr. Gladstone answered that he had some information in addition to the letter. Mr. Forster asked whether Mr. Parnell had read the whole of the letter. Mr. Parnell said he had read the

\* At this date Mr. Biggar had just returned from Paris, where he had made the acquaintance of a widow lady, an intimacy which resulted in an action for breach of promise to marry.

whole of the copy supplied to him by Mr. O'Shea, but as far as he was concerned there was no objection to reading another paragraph which the original had contained. Mr. O'Shea being thus referred to, said perhaps he had better take an early opportunity of explaining the whole of the circumstances connected with the correspondence.

Mr. Forster thereupon, amid loud cheers from the Conservatives, handed a document to Mr. O'Shea, and asked him to read the last paragraph. Mr. O'Shea, after glancing over the document, handed it back to Mr. Forster, who declined to take it, observing, "It's not my letter." After some further hesitation, observed with loud laughter and cheers from the Opposition benches, Mr. O'Shea read the whole of the document, including a paragraph in which Mr. Parnell undertook that in circumstances already indicated he and his friends would be able to co-operate cordially with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal principles. Mr. T. P. O'Connor, amid cheers from Mr. Healy, asked whether Mr. Forster had obtained a copy of the letter as a member of the Cabinet. Mr. Forster showed an inclination to answer, but the Speaker ruled that the question was out of order. Mr. Onslow asked whether the Premier had had that letter in his possession at the time he had stated there was no compact between the Land Leaguers and the Liberal party. Mr. Gladstone emphatically answered that he had had the letter at the time, and he now repeated what he had said at first, that there never was an understanding of any kind between Mr. Parnell and the Government. Mr. Parnell asked nothing; nothing was asked on the Government side, and certainly nothing was got from him.

May 16. — More  
of the Kilmain-  
ham Treaty.

At the morning sitting Sir Stafford Northcote returned to the question of the correspondence between Mr. Parnell and Mr. O'Shea. It seemed to him, he said, amid loud cheering from the Opposition, that the question connected with the release of the members could not remain in the position in which it was left on the previous night. He therefore asked whether the Government could give any further information with regard to this proceeding; whether more specific negotiations were addressed to any other members of the Government than the Prime Minister and Mr.

Forster; and whether any members of the Government had personal interviews with Mr. Parnell before his release; and, lastly, whether the release of Michael Davitt was stipulated for in any communication made by Mr. Parnell.

Mr. Gladstone, who was received with loud cheers from the Liberal benches, said whilst he was ready to answer any question, he was not prepared to volunteer any statement, being of the opinion that some part of the proceedings of the previous night were not only not favourable, but were lamentably unfavourable to the due discharge of the Executive in Ireland. He reminded the House, in answer to one of Sir Stafford Northcote's questions, that Mr. O'Shea had on the previous night read a letter he had received from Mr. Chamberlain. No member of the Government had to his knowledge had interviews with Mr. Parnell. There was no stipulation as to the release of Michael Davitt, or on any other subject.

The Premier was subjected to severe cross-examination by Lord John Manners, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Onslow, Captain Aylmer, and Sir Henry Wolff. He replied frankly to all questions, but without making any fresh disclosures of criminal action on the part of the Government. Mr. Labouchere, amid loud cheers from the Liberal side, asked whether it was in accordance with official usage for a gentleman who had left the Cabinet to read a *précis* of a private communication which was made to him as a member of the Cabinet by a member of the House without the consent of his colleagues? Mr. Gladstone declined to express any opinion on Mr. Forster's conduct. He was, he said, not in any better position to pass judgment upon it than was any member of the House. This significant remark was received with loud cheering.

Mr. Forster explained that he should never have thought of bringing this confidential document forward had it not been for the statement of Mr. O'Shea. Mr. O'Shea, on joining in the conversation, was called to order by the Speaker, on the ground that he was entering on matters of debate. Mr. Balfour hereupon moved the adjournment of the House, in order to give the Government a more ample opportunity of explaining their conduct, and the Opposition a fuller chance of criticising it. He availed himself of the opportunity to accuse

the Government of “infamy,” “degradation,” and much else. This brought up Mr. Gladstone again, who, now speaking with some heat, rebuked the hon. member for giving the lie to a body of gentlemen quite as much entitled to credence as himself, and who, having grown grey in the service of their country, felt it no slight matter, so far as their character and reputation were concerned, that these rash accusations should be hurled against them from such a quarter. Summarising Mr. Balfour’s description of the compact, Mr. Gladstone submitted that it set forth that Mr. Parnell was to secure his release and to obtain legislation as to arrears on condition that he should give to the Government peace in Ireland and Parliamentary support. Asking whether that was a fair statement of the charge, and being answered by a cheer from the Opposition benches, Mr. Gladstone, turning to the Speaker, continued :

“ May I say, Sir, that there is not one word of truth in it from beginning to end”—a statement received with loud cheers from the Liberal benches.

Those who made charges of infamy against the Government were bound to carry them to the issue. Mr. Balfour should either prove his charges or abandon them with an expression of regret. It was not tolerable that charges of this kind were to be made and not sustained. If they were made and not sustained, they were disgraceful only to those who made them.

Mr. Gibson thought the language of bold, passionate, and inflammatory denial was not sufficient answer to the facts disclosed. The feeling in the country was not to be put aside by indignation, nor even by ridicule. Mr. Gibson defended the course taken by Mr. Forster as that of “a gentleman and a man of honour.”

During Mr. Gibson’s speech there was a scene of some excitement. Mr. Gibson spoke of Lord Beaconsfield having run the gauntlet of the Prime Minister’s unmeasured vituperation. Mr. Gladstone rose, but the courtesy ordinarily extended to a member desiring to make a personal statement was denied to the Premier by Mr. Gibson, who, amid loud cries from both sides of the House, some of indignation, and some of encouragement, retained his place at the table. After briefly sustaining the physical conflict, the Premier resumed his seat. The Speaker

made some remark, inaudible amid the uproar, which resulted in Mr. Gibson giving way, when Mr. Gladstone recalled the attention of the House to the fact that Lord Beaconsfield had in another place brought against him the charge of using unmeasured vituperation, that citation of the passages had been invited, and investigation and production promised, but this promise was never fulfilled. Mr. Gibson withdrew the words, substituting the "most strong and severe criticism."

Sir W. Harcourt briskly retorted on the speech of Mr. Balfour, and proceeded to answer in detail the remarks of Mr. Gibson. Lord John Manners kept up the excitement with a speech vigorous, if occasionally a little spasmodic. Mr. Forster repeated his statement made earlier in the sitting, that had it not been for Mr. O'Shea's speech, he would never have produced the written document. Sir Walter Barttelot, with loud voice and emphatic manner, repeated much that had been said by earlier speakers on the same side. Mr. Chamberlain, who followed, said with respect to the sentence in the letter which had been withheld from the House, that Mr. O'Shea, in originally communicating the letter to him, had asked leave to withdraw this sentence; but the incident had made so little impression on his mind that when the letter was read by Mr. Parnell he had not noticed that this had been done in the copy handed to Mr. Parnell by Mr. O'Shea.

Mr. O'Shea, amid loud cheers from the Liberals, observed that he did not know what was etiquette amongst Cabinet Ministers, but he had had a pretty long acquaintance with the usages of gentlemen, and from that point of view the conduct of Mr. Forster on the previous night appeared most extraordinary. In a brief, but vigorous speech, he further characterised the conduct of Mr. Forster as "disloyal to his old friends, and malignant to his old enemies." By this time the proceedings, which had lasted about four hours, had a little palled upon the House. After some remarks from Mr. Laing, Sir Stafford Northcote suggested that the amendment should be withdrawn. But the Liberals not being inclined to see the Opposition retire in this manner, the conversation was kept up. Sir Henry Fletcher succeeded in talking up to ten minutes to seven, when the subject necessarily dropped.

May 26. — The  
new Irish Sec-  
retary.

The House of Commons, the quickest and best judge of character in the world, has arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Gladstone made a good choice when he nominated Mr. Trevelyan to the Irish Chief Secretaryship. The appointment was hailed with approval as soon as it was announced, and during the few days Mr. Trevelyan has held it in the face of the House the approval has vastly increased. When Mr. Trevelyan was below the gangway he belonged to the school of serious young men who, like the Coningsby set, think the State is to be saved by its youth. When he had to make a speech on any subject, it was, as Mr. O'Donnell said the other night when he challenged a division against Mr. Parnell, a matter of conscience. He came to his task weighted with responsibilities and manuscript notes. What he had to say had been laboriously thought out, and was not to be lightly uttered, or at moderate length.

The Whigs.

Mr. Trevelyan was in those days, as serious as Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, which is saying a great deal. He had the advantage of his noble friend, inasmuch that, wherein he varied from the straight line of Liberalism, he leaned to the Radical side, whilst Lord Edmond is a Whig. For reasons which it would be interesting to trace, Whigs are always serious people. Another peculiarity is that there is a decidedly middle-aged flavour about their youth. Mr. Brand, for example, is still young in years, but he is one of the most middle-aged young men of the present epoch. There is a deliberateness in his movement, and a gravity in his manner, which cannot all be derived from his relationship with the Chair. Mr. Heneage, though a year older, is far removed from the period of life called middle-age. Yet none would think of regarding Mr. Heneage as a young man, or of speaking disrespectfully of the Constitution within his hearing. There is now, as in the last century, a solemn mystery about the Whig party, which is manifested in its individual members. "I never could find," said George III.'s mother, "that the party was anything else but the Duke of Devonshire and his son, and old Horace Walpole." The difficulty exists to this day in the House of Commons. Now, as far as accustomed intervention in debate is concerned, it might be said that one could

never find that the party was anything else but Mr. Heneage, Mr. Brand, and Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice. When critical divisions are at hand there is a diligent counting up of Whigs, and much speculation indulged in as to how they will vote. When the division bell rings the House beholds ten or a dozen grave and essentially middle-aged men file out, and instinctively knows that these are the Whigs, more especially if they are assisted to the conclusion by finding them walking out before the division. There is no place on the Treasury bench for the Whigs in a Ministry constituted as at present. In the House of Lords, where the atmosphere is less turbulent, this prohibition does not hold with the same severity. If it were possible for Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice to become Marquis of Lansdowne, he might safely look for colleagueship under the genial leadership of Lord Granville. During recent shuffling of the Ministerial cards Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice's name was frequently mentioned. Doubtless the interesting experiment is only delayed, and we shall some day have the opportunity of seeing how far the circumstances of the Treasury bench will improve Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice's manner, as it has done that of his old friend Mr. Trevelyan.

Mr. Forster. It is a little early to talk of Mr. Trevelyan's success, but it is, perhaps, true wisdom to speak pleasant things whilst opportunity offers. It is said by the melancholy minded that when Mr. Forster first took office a like measure of credit was given to his honesty of purpose, kindness of heart, and the desire to do the best possible for Ireland. That is true; but the comparison between the former Chief Secretary and the present must stop there. Mr. Forster has great qualities, but no one would accuse him of a disposition to underrate his own capacity. The Irish members recognise in Mr. Trevelyan an innate courtesy and a pretty show of deference to fuller information, which is all the more agreeable after recent experience. On the other hand, English or Scotch members see, or think they see, a strong determination to yield nothing to petulant discontent or angry clamour. Mr. Trevelyan evidently thinks that nothing is lost, either in the refusing or granting a request, by investing the action with a gracious manner; wherein he essentially differs from his predecessor.

Mr. Forster early got into a cross groove, and continued to run in it to the end of his official connection with Ireland. As Chief Secretary he had much to put up with, and was nightly assaulted in the House of Commons with a violence and personal spite to which we find no parallel in recent history. It has always, and more particularly within the last eight years, been the fate of the Irish Secretary to be the mark of the slings and arrows of outrageous Home Rulers. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was taunted with having gained his sole information of Irish affairs by "circumnavigating the Shannon on an outside car." The bland manners of Mr. James Lowther were ruffled and his innocent gaiety eclipsed by ruthless assaults by Mr. Biggar and elaborate taunts from Mr. Parnell. But nothing of these, or the aggregate of them, equalled a tenth part of the personal abuse heaped upon Mr. Forster in the House of Commons from question time till adjournment. Mr. Forster constantly felt called upon to justify himself. The government of Ireland became a personal question, the Irish members inflating question hour with petty charges against Mr. Forster and his subordinates in the executive, and the Chief Secretary laboriously replying. This is a condition of affairs in some measure chronic. But it was undoubtedly aggravated by certain strongly marked personal characteristics of Mr. Forster, which, as far as observation yet carries the House, are absent from the mind and manner of Mr. Trevelyan.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE CRIMES BILL IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. Newdegate in mirthful Mood—Mr. Biggar's Opportunity—In Committee—Sir William Harcourt and the Irish Members—The O'Gorman Mahon—About Eye-glasses—Lord Beaconsfield's—Mr. Gladstone's—Mr. Chamberlain's—Mr. O'Donnell's—Mr. Healy's—Mr. Biggar's—Mr. MacIver's—Mr. Chaplin's—A complete Answer—A Monument to Mr. Chamberlain—A nice Point of Order.

June 9.—Mr. Ireland and Irish members have always possessed Newdegate in an especial interest for Mr. Newdegate. There mirthful mood. was a time, now long past, when private members had a chance of bringing forward their pet notions, and when, year after year, they moved for an inquiry into conventional institutions. That was a warm subject for any man to touch, and few but Mr. Newdegate could have done it without grievously burning their fingers. But Irish members then, as always, have recognised the honesty of purpose with which the task was undertaken, and even in gravest moments—and moments with Mr. Newdegate are mostly grave—the conflict has been conducted with marvellous good temper. The relations then established have continued. By accident it has come to pass that the Irish members are Mr. Newdegate's near neighbours in the House of Commons. He sits among them with monumental gravity, undisturbed by their lightness of heart, and untainted by their disloyalty to the Constitution. Lord Palmerston, revisiting the House, would surely stare to find Mr. Newdegate seated among the remarkable collection of gentlemen who, in fulfilment of Grattan's bitter prophecy, represent Ireland in the present Parliament. The late leader of the House would as soon expect to see a bishop in a bar-room, or Lord Shaftesbury in the ring at Epsom.

But misfortune makes a man acquainted with strange bedfellows, and since there has come to pass the misfortune of such an overwhelming preponderance of members on the Liberal benches that the available space will not hold them, Mr. Newdegate cannot help it if the members of the extreme Irish party group themselves around him. It is the irony of Fate, and he

bears it with grave dignity and proud disregard. When he rises from their midst they are always ready to welcome him with friendly cheer. There is a story told in the smoke room which, like much else that finds currency there, is probably not historical, but which illustrates Mr. Newdegate's popularity among the Irish members. Rising one night just before the Whitsun Recess, he was received with the usual hilarious cheer from the Irish members. "Who's that?" said a stranger in the gallery to his neighbour. The neighbour did not know, but arrived at the conclusion that only one person would be thus applauded from the left wing of the Irish party. He answered promptly, "That's Mr. Parnell," and to the end of his speech the hon. member for North Warwickshire was listened to with interest, though with some bewilderment, under the impression that he was the leader of the Irish party, and that this depressed manner was the natural consequence of six months in Kilmainham.

To-night, returning to the House from fresh studies of the Irish question, Mr. Newdegate had manifestly thrown off his melancholy as it were a garment. The House, accustomed to find in this seat a figure of solemnest gravity, was surprised to discover the miraculous transformation. His straight, tall figure, set off to advantage in evening dress, his blood-red handkerchief (the nearest approach to traffic with the Scarlet Lady possible to him) clasped in his right hand, his face wrinkled with smiles, and his eyes beaming with fun, Mr. Newdegate sat forward on his seat, the better to survey the House. Il Pensero had disappeared, and L'Allégro sat in her place. Mr. Newdegate had tried the pleasures that Melancholy had to give, had found them as bitter herbs, and had now decided to live with Mirth. The spectacle had a remarkable effect upon the Committee. It was idle now to talk about Clause 4 and its possible effect upon that liberty of the subject which is so dear to the heart of the members of the Land League. There had been enough work for one night. L'Allégro had come to bid the House be merry, and had brought with her

Jest and youthful Jollity,  
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,  
Nods and Becks and wreathed Smiles,  
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,  
And love to live in dimple sleek;  
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,  
And Laughter holding both his sides.

If Mr. Newdegate, when presently he rose, had proposed that in the absence of the Maypole they should take the mace from under the table and set it up in the middle of the floor, that Mr. Healy should join hands with Dr. Lyon Playfair, Sir William Harcourt should take Mr. Parnell round the waist, and Mr. Newdegate himself should lead off the dance with Mr. Biggar, none would have been too utterly surprised. At any rate, the Committee would have been quite as usefully employed, and would have been making quite as full measure of progress towards the passing of the Prevention of Crime Bill as it was at the moment when this amazing spectacle beamed upon it from the top corner seat below the gangway. Mr. Newdegate, though for the moment as merry a man within the limits of becoming mirth as the House contained, was too old and too constitutional a member to make any such unparliamentary suggestion. It was all very well to be merry ; but, at the same time, the business of the nation must be attended to, and the order of debate preserved.

Mr. Newdegate had discovered, in the course of his studies, a speech made somewhere, at some time last year, by Mr. Parnell. It contained a reference to Archbishop Croke, and appeared to him to be exceedingly applicable to the subject immediately under discussion by the Committee. The speech and the allusion to Archbishop Croke in some occult way led up to the propounding of the conundrum. Why is Ireland not like Yorkshire ? And this Mr. Newdegate, oddly reminiscent of Mr. Pecksniff one memorable night at Todgers's, standing, as it were, on the top landing and looking over the banisters, persisted in putting to the Committee in the varying notes of his most impressive voice. With body leaning forward, arm beating to the right and then to the left, with voice reaching the profoundest depths of a thrilling whisper, and anon rising to the stormiest heights of thunderous indignation, he asked, "Why is Ireland not like Yorkshire ?" He put it generally and he put it individually, pressing it more particularly upon the attention of Mr. Parnell, who sat immediately below him, and whom he literally pecked with his terrible right hand. Doubtless Mr. Parnell knew, but, taking advantage of the axiom that no man is bound to criminate himself by any answer he may give in a court of justice, he maintained a dogged silence.

As for the Committee, they were unanimous in giving it up. Mr. Borlase, rising to order, Mr. Newdegate thought he was going to answer the question, and stood with his head on one side, and a benevolent smile on his face, eyeing the adventurous intruder, as who should say, "No, *you* will not guess it." The Committee hooted at Mr. Newdegate, who in remaining standing was infringing a rule of the House. Closing one eye, he shook his head at them. "No, that was not the answer." The Chairman of Committees struggled with him in vain; members opposite angrily cried, "Name, name!" Others rose to order. But they were all wrong. Sir Walter Barttelot whispered something across the gangway. Mr. Newdegate bent to listen, but shook his head with a kindly and amused smile. Even Sir Walter Barttelot hadn't guessed it. On all sides the tumult rose. The Chairman was distraught. The Irish members alone stood by their old friend, and loudly cheered him. Mr. Newdegate enjoyed his triumph for a moment, and then with the same benevolent smile sank back in his seat. They were a clever lot this Liberal majority. They could disestablish a Church and bring in a whole series of Land Bills, but they could not tell him why Ireland was not like Yorkshire.

June 12.—Mr. Biggar's opportunity. Shortly after eight o'clock the division bell, which had been hard worked since the Committee began, gave way. The battery broke down, and in view of Mr. Biggar's familiar tactics consternation temporarily prevailed. Members in distant parts of the House are dependent on the bells for information of a division or a count. An attempt was made to patch up the battery whilst the Chairman was at his tea, but it failed. Immediately on Dr. Playfair's resuming his seat Mr. Biggar moved a count. But in the meantime a corps of messengers had been organised, who were despatched to all parts of the House, loudly announcing the count, and the member for Cavan had the satisfaction of seeing upwards of a hundred members crowding in.

June 16.—In Committee. Another week has passed, and the House of Commons still finds itself engaged on the 7th clause of the Crime Bill. What is worse than the slow progress hitherto made is the evidence hourly forthcoming that

the Obstructionists are as much resolved as ever to keep the Bill back. The Land Leaguers, knowing their power, don't put a silken glove over the mailed hand. Standing up for liberty, and against coercion, they coerce Ministers and abridge the privileges of the majority in the roughest possible manner. When an amendment has been discussed for hours, divided upon, and rejected by an overwhelming majority, it is the pleasant habit of the Land Leaguers to bring it forward in a slightly different form. There is a rule of the House by which it is decreed that a question once decided upon cannot be brought up again. But this rule, like most others, the ingenuity of the Irish members evades. A slight alteration in verbiage or application puts it out of the power of the Chairman to challenge it, and the debate begins again. In these circumstances it sometimes happens that Sir William Harcourt declines to accept his part in the farce, and will not make his speech over again. Thereupon the Chairman, prompt enough in these cases, rises to put the question. Then Mr. Parnell, or some other of the Land League party below the gangway, springs to his feet, and angrily moves to report progress. There must sometimes be a natural impulse on the part of the Home Secretary to resist this dictation; but it is a Minister's business to get a Bill through. A division on the motion to report progress would take twice as long as the delivering of a speech, and of course if he still resisted there would be the process of moving that "the Chairman leave the chair," that he "report progress," and so the night must be wasted.

It will be seen that a Minister of the Crown has no more liberty of individual action than a galley-slave. He must do exactly as he is ordered by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Healy, or Mr. Callan; must rise and speak when they think proper, and must be exceedingly choice in his phraseology; for though the Land Leaguers habitually bring the most odious charges against all kinds of people from whom they differ, and personally vilify members of the House, if in a moment of irritation any one says a few frank words about them, they run whining for the protection of the Speaker, and gratefully waste an hour in complaining.

The gentlemen of England who sit at home at ease reading their Parliamentary reports little know the perils not only of

Ministers in charge of Bills affecting Ireland, but of all members whose sense of duty keeps them in the House whilst discussion is going on. The newspaper reports supply some proportion of what is said, but it is necessarily curtailed, and is always unaccentuated by the loud tones and insolent manner with which the Land Leaguers delight to show their freedom from social considerations and the ordinary courtesies of every-day life. Their avowed object is to make themselves and their country so obnoxious in the eyes and ears of England, that in some moment of despair Parliament may bid them go to College Green, and, presently calling the watch together, thank Heaven they are rid of a knave.

June 13. — Sir  
Wm. Harcourt  
and the Irish  
members.

The gift of occasional silence is of incalculable value to a statesman, especially if he has to do with Ireland. From Mr. Forster the gods withheld this. Whenever any one brought against him an accusation, however self-contradictory, and, on the face of it, absurd, he found it impossible to sit still, but pursued his accuser with heavy artillery of contradiction. That was just what the Irish members wanted. It aggravated their personal enemy, and introduced disorder into the debate.

Hitherto Sir William Harcourt, brought into immediate contact with the Irish members, has shown himself better able to cope with them. During the later months of his administration, Mr. Forster hit upon a method of receiving the Irish attack which was at least well designed. Seated with back low down on the Treasury bench, with legs outstretched and chin sunk on his chest, he sat and stared straight before him, while Mr. Healy scolded and Mr. Biggar jeered. But the close observer would discover from time to time convulsive movements of the legs, or a tremor of the body which showed where a dart had struck. Irish wit and humour, of the fashion introduced to the House by the present representatives of the country, play harmlessly round the stately figure of the Home Secretary. His impregnable self-content serves as a lightning conductor. The electric current may strike it, but is carried harmlessly into the vaults beneath the House, leaving Sir William Harcourt unscathed. It is true that to-night he broke forth in protest against the bullying of Mr. T. P. O'Connor; but that was a reproof

administered rather on behalf of a body of gentlemen against the intrusion of bar-room manners than as a disclosure of personal resentment. It was much needed, was well delivered, and for a quarter of an hour was effective.

When he is himself the object of attack, Sir William Harcourt looks on and smiles softly. He is really amused, and though, as the Minister in charge of the Bill, he recognises some waste of time, yet, if people must talk, what more interesting and inexhaustible subject is there than Sir William Harcourt? The smile is so genuine, and betokens such fathomless serenity of mind, such absolute unconcern for the opinion of the speaker, that it completely baffles the assailant. Mr. Forster, under similar provocation, would have tossed angrily on his seat, would have presently risen, and, with solemn, impressive manner, "totally denied" something; or, producing his well-stocked despatch-box, would have brought forth documentary evidence of the absolute unreliability of the speaker. Sir William Harcourt softly strokes his chin and smiles—almost purrs like a cat caressed. To bring about this frame of mind was not the primary object of his assailant; and after one or two attempts, with the same result, the particular line of attack is abandoned, and Irish members discover some other way of not discussing the business immediately before the House.

June 20. — The  
O'Gorman Ma-  
hon.

Coming in after dinner to see what can be done for Ireland strides The O'Gorman Mahon.

No one knows how old The Mahon is, but none, looking at his tall and stalwart figure as he walks up the House, would dare to guess he were much over seventy. His earliest authentic record goes back to 1831, when he sat for Clare in the unreformed Parliament; but there is a vague impression among his compatriots that he was a midshipman at the time of the Armada, and has had many a cigar out of Sir Walter Raleigh's case. He was certainly at Waterloo, and rode in the charge led by George IV., at that time Prince Regent. The Mahon has preserved to patriarchal age all the sweetness of disposition of early and untroubled youth. The only time he is known to be angry is when any one, presuming he does not hear so well as he did eighty years ago, raises his voice a little above its normal pitch.

The one member of the party with whom he is not on amicable terms is Mr. Synan, "who shouts so," The Mahon says, reproachfully. It was Mr. Synan who, meeting The Mahon in the lobby the night the news reached the House of the capture of Lefroy, the Brighton murderer, mentioned the circumstance in his familiar whisper.\* The old warrior, catching only half the news, pieced out the remainder from a mind greatly troubled at the time by frequent arrests of Land League patriots, and went about for the remainder of the evening with a sob in his voice as he stopped his acquaintances with the news, "Another of our poor fellows arrested! Where will it end, where will it end?"

June 23.—About the use of the eye-glass, and the developments eye-glasses. of it, form an interesting study of parliamentary life. Years ago, when Mr. Bright was a more prominent personage in politics, his likeness regularly appeared in *Punch* with the appendage of an eye-glass. No reader of *Punch* would recognise Mr. Bright without his eye-glass, whilst, by an odd coincidence, no one who knew him in actual life would recognise him with one. By what freak of fancy, or upon what misapprehension of fact, Mr. Tenniel was led to invest Mr. Bright with an eye-glass has not been publicly stated. However that be, Mr. Bright always appeared in *Punch* with an eye-glass firmly fixed, just as Lord Palmerston, in whatever attitude and under whatever circumstances presented, always carried a twig between his lips. Lord Beaconsfield did wear an eye-glass whenever he could find it, which was not always. Whilst he was yet with us in the House of Commons he spent an appreciable portion of an average Session in looking for his eye-glass, which had mysterious methods of dispersing itself over his person, leading to much embarrassment. One night when he had been diligently searching for it for the space of ten minutes Lord Barrington found it in the neighbourhood of his spine, and handed it to his grateful chief. When Lord Barrington was made a peer, and ill-disposed people wondered why, this little incident was remembered. Lord Beaconsfield was not an effusive person, but he never forgot a friend or a favour.

\* Mr. Synan has an ear-piercing voice. "Where are you going?" some one asked Mr. James Lowther, the Secretary for Ireland, meeting him rushing out of the House of Commons when Mr. Synan was speaking. "On to the Terrace to hear Synan," Mr. Lowther said.

Lord Beaconsfield's. Having caught his eye-glass, a fresh difficulty with Lord Beaconsfield was to fix it. Then must he have envied the easy grace and trained skill with which Mr. O'Donnell plays with his eye-glass. The later years of Lord Beaconsfield's life were gilded with the reflection of honours fairly won and granted with the people's applause. But they were also tinged with regret that the fixing of his eye-glass should continue to be a deliberate undertaking requiring physical force not always attended with adequate result. He literally screwed his eye-glass under his left eye-brow, as if there were some particular wrinkle there that served the purpose of the worm of the screw. He would have been wiser to have boldly assumed spectacles, or, at least, to mount a *pince-nez*. But there is a jauntiness about the eye-glass that commanded itself to the still youthful energies of the aged Premier, and he bravely struggled with it to the last.

Mr. Gladstone's. Early in the present Parliament Mr. Gladstone astonished the House by producing a pair of glasses with which to read a newspaper extract. With him also the natural tendency of eye-glasses to be out of the way when they are wanted betrayed itself; and on one occasion, not being able to find his glasses, he selected one from half a dozen pairs proffered by enthusiastic friends on the back benches, just as on a still more memorable occasion he obtained the temporary loan of the Solicitor-General's hat. Happily Mr. Gladstone, renewing his youth like the eagle, has given up glasses. They are all very well for elderly people like Mr. Dodds. But Mr. Gladstone can do without them. This is a comfort, since he has only been accustomed to use them when desiring to read an extract illustrative of his argument, and by the time he has found the glasses and opened them he is in such an impatient frame of mind from the temporary restraint that he is just as likely as not to put them on wrong side up.

Mr. Chamberlain's. Mr. Chamberlain's eye-glass is a well-known feature at public meetings, whether at Westminster or Birmingham. Three months ago, the President of the Board of Trade, feeling his responsibility as a Cabinet Minister, was struck with the frivolity of the eye-glass, and appeared with the more decorous *pince-nez*. But the attempt proved as hope-

less as David's essay to wear Saul's armour. Mr. Chamberlain has been for many years accustomed to fight under cover of an eye-glass, and after a brief struggle with the double glasses, he gratefully went back to his accustomed manner.

**Mr. O'Donnell's.** Perhaps the most familiar eye-glass in the House of Commons is Mr. O'Donnell's. We see a great deal of it in the course of a Session. By dint of practice he has become surprisingly expert in its use. He can do everything with it short of tossing it up and catching it under his eyebrow. Whilst he was yet unaccustomed to the audience, and was practising upon it, the eye-glass played an important part. When the precise word did not occur to the mind, the eye-glass fell out, and Mr. O'Donnell deliberately went in search of it. By the time he had captured it, and refixed it, he had thought of the word, and the eye-glass remained in position till another difficulty arose. By reason of constant practice, from which the House has grievously suffered, Mr. O'Donnell is now so apt at continuous speaking that the little play with the eye-glass is superfluous, though from force of habit it still falls out and is picked up. From time to time he says some of the best things uttered under the glass roof of the House—phrases which come nearer to the Disraelian perfection than anything now left to us. Nothing happier in Parliamentary phrasing has been uttered than his distinction between Sir Charles Dilke's mode of answering questions, and that of the Premier. Not so polished, but wonderfully graphic and complete, was his reference the other night to the "rollicking political incompetency" of Mr. James Lowther. If this, and many other things dropped from time to time with Mr. O'Donnell's eye-glass, had been uttered by the late Mr. Disraeli, or by Mr. Bright, they would have passed from mouth to mouth till they had become familiar parts of speech. There are, it appears, two things required to make a successful sayer of good things. One is the capacity to say them, and the other an inclination on the part of the public to receive them from the utterer.

**Mr. Healy's.** Mr. Healy, who under a barbarous manner assumed with little difficulty hides a shrewd appreciation of ways of getting on, probably took note of the

uses and successes of Mr. O'Donnell's eye-glass. Shortly after entering the House, he added a fresh charm to his personal appearance by looking out upon the House through an eye-glass. But he makes no play with it. Having stuck it in his eye, he leaves it there, and lets it work its full effect upon the mind of the House.

Mr. Biggar's. Mr. Biggar would have neither the frivolity of the eye-glass nor the compromise of a *pince-nez*. A good substantial pair of horn-bound spectacles, such as might be sat upon without fracture, serve his purpose, and when worn lend an air of benevolence to the countenance very soothing to his audience.

Mr. MacIver's. Another familiar pair of spectacles are those through which Mr. MacIver diffuses his bland and childlike smile upon the House. It is not mentioned in history whether Mr. Toots wore spectacles. To some minds it seems natural to accept it as a certainty that he did. Mr. Toots, having found out the folly of tailoring, having put away the companionship of the Chicken, and having carried into politics the same simplicity of mind, and the same heady enthusiasm which endeared him to his friends, undoubtedly sits for Birkenhead in the present Parliament.

Mr. Chaplin's. Perhaps, after all, the most remarkable and most effective eye-glass in the House is Mr. Chaplin's. He does not force it upon attention as Mr. O'Donnell does his, nor is it so prominent a feature as Mr. Chamberlain's. But its influence, whilst more subtle, is not less powerfully felt. So unobtrusive is its individuality that many members may have sat in Parliament from February to August and only in July have observed that Mr. Chaplin always wears an eye-glass when addressing the House. He does not waste its capacities on slight occasions, and, consequently, when crises arrive its energies are found unimpaired. Such an occasion presented itself to-night. Mr. Chaplin had come down prepared to move the adjournment at question time, in order to offer a few casual remarks on the Suez Canal, with respect to which he had made some remarkable discoveries. When he rose for this purpose, a shout of impatient anger greeted him from the

crowded benches opposite. It was then Mr. Chaplin produced his eye-glass, and affixing it, turned and stared at the uproarious crowd before him. Was it possible that when Mr. Chaplin, having looked up in the *Encyclopædia*, and other more or less inaccessible works of reference, a few facts respecting the Suez Canal, and had taken this opportunity of conveying them to the House and the country—was it possible that hon. members should interrupt him with cries of impatience? The eye-glass was plainly incredulous. As he proceeded, and lavished his carefully gathered information on the House, the uproar increased. Mr. Chaplin was aghast.

“The Canal,” he said, waiting for a favourable pause in the uproar, “runs from sea to sea through a sandy desert.”

There was a sentence, replete with information, musical with alliteration, and sonorous as a line from a poem of blank verse. The House, wickedly feigning to be intensely gratified by this information, loudly cheered, a demonstration repeated when Mr. Chaplin added that “there is a large pumping station at Ismailia.” “I may be wrong,” he said a little later, whereat there were stormy cries of “No, no.” The laughter grew more boisterous, and the eye-glass, turning upon it a glance in which astonishment was blended in sorrow, finally settled down into a look of grim determination. There are times when it becomes a duty to cope with the natural lack of appreciation of swine for pearls. This seemed to be one of them, and with the aid of his eye-glass Mr. Chaplin finished his speech.

June 27.—A complete answer. In the course of conversation this evening, Sir Henry Wolff asked whether it was not a usual course to submit a report of conversations between diplomatists for the purpose of verifying them. As a specimen of the terseness, and yet absolute comprehensiveness of Sir Charles Dilke’s replies, his answer to this proposition put without notice may be reproduced.

“It is frequently done,” said the right hon. baronet, “but is not the invariable practice. Some do it; some never do it; and some do it sometimes.”

June 28.—A monument to Mr. Chamberlain. It has been decided to stop the Channel Tunnel works, pending the report of the Departmental Committee; and Mr. Chamberlain, as President of the Board of Trade, is charged with seeing that behest

carried out. In this undertaking he has secured for himself the implacable and undying animosity of Sir Edward Watkin. If the irate baronet follows up his present intention, his little quarrel with the President of the Board of Trade will be perpetuated in an original form. Sir Edward declares that in the event of the Channel Tunnel works being permanently stopped, he will erect on the site a stone pillar high enough to be seen by all vessels passing up and down the Channel, and on a clear day visible even from the coast of France. On this he will have engraved an inscription setting forth how the tunnel was visited by the Prince of Wales and other Royal personages, by Mr. Gladstone, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and by a large contingent of peers and commoners ; and how, when all seemed prosperous and all the world applauded, the works were peremptorily " stopped by Joseph Chamberlain, of Birmingham." " Joseph Chamberlain " and " Birmingham " are each to have a line of bad preeminence to themselves, for Sir Edward Watkin does not know which is the more hateful in the ears of good men and honest politicians.

June 29.—A nice point of order. In the interval between the Speaker's leaving the Chair and Dr. Lyon Playfair taking his seat at the table, on going into Committee on the Crime Bill, Mr. Bromley-Davenport walked out with his hat on, to the manifest horror of members who loudly cried " Order ! " The hon. member was taken in charge by the Sergeant-at-Arms, but argued with him the point whether he was not perfectly in order, seeing that the Mace had been removed and no president was in either Chair. Mr. George Elliot attempted to bring the matter to a crisis by putting his hat on and boldly walking in the footsteps of Mr. Bromley-Davenport, shaking his head defiantly at the cries for order, which chiefly came from the Irish members. Whilst the dispute was still going on, Dr. Playfair took the Chair, and further experiments on the niceties of Parliamentary etiquette were rendered impossible.

## CHAPTER XX.

### SUSPENSION OF TWENTY-FIVE IRISH MEMBERS.

Before an all-night Sitting—Suspension of twenty-five Irish Members.

June 30.—Before an all-night sitting. Mr. Biggar's spirits, which have never fully

recovered from a recent domestic shock, blazed up to-night with all their wonted gaiety. As the war-horse scents the battle from afar, tosses its mane, and paws the ground with proud forefoot, so the once familiar smile was again hung out over the lower part of Mr. Biggar's face, and he thrust his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat with the ancient content. Things had now reached a climax. Night after night through twenty nights the farce of attempting to discuss the Crime Bill had been going on. The public and the House had grown awearied. Mr. Gladstone had at length yielded to the representations of more ardent colleagues, and determined to make a stand. The bruised worm will turn sometimes, as Sir Andrew Lusk once told a Committee of Supply of the House of Commons. The House had been sorely bruised through weeks and months, and now it was about to turn.

It was with difficulty that Mr. Biggar could be got off to bed. On the first occasion when all-night sittings were introduced into the armoury of legislation, he snatched a brief interval of repose. Towards four o'clock in the morning he stretched himself out on three chairs in the Library, and people in the adjoining newsroom suspected some one in the neighbourhood was asleep. At seven o'clock he reappeared, just too late to hear Mr. Briggs quote his appropriate verse, but time enough to assure eighty jaded members, who had been sitting up the whole of the night, that he had had a good sleep, and came back like a giant refreshed. Mr. Biggar now wanted to be up all night. He was, he pleaded, "Thoroughly fresh." Ten minutes in a chair at any time would do for him. But precious lives must be guarded, and at the earnest entreaties of his

colleagues, he consented to retire at midnight—to come back again with the freshness and fragrance of early morning to an unexpected doom.

But before he went, he would bear his share of the burden of speech. In this exercise he is habitually hampered by two considerations. He knows very little about the Bill, or the conditions of its applicability to Ireland; and Nature has not gifted him with much fluency, wherein, as regards the House of Commons, the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb. Mr. Biggar, with sufficient intelligence to grasp a question of greater breadth than the claims of Mr. John Clare, and with a tongue as fluent as Mr. Redmond's, would advance the accomplishment of Home Rule by an appreciable space of time. What he likes to have in hand whilst making a speech is a stout Blue-book, good for extracts four hours long. To-night there lay on the bench near him a prodigious red volume. This was "Thom's Almanack," and Dr. Lyon Playfair moved uneasily in his chair, apprehensive that it was Mr. Biggar's intention to read a few passages of this work by way of illustrating his argument. Perhaps he had such intention if words had failed him. But such was his elevation of spirits, and such the prospective delight at waking at some early hour in the morning, coming down to the House, finding it still sitting, and plunging into the fray, as a man would plunge into his morning bath, that Mr. Biggar astonished himself by his eloquence.

In the absence of "Thom's Almanack" there is one unfailing resource for Mr. Biggar to pleasantly wile away the time. Once on his legs he does not get very far before Dr. Lyon Playfair rises, and, with monitory finger, calls his attention to the fact that he is wandering from the subject.

"Well, Dr. Playfair," says Mr. Biggar, with his thumb in the left armhole of his waistcoat, and a prodigious hand extended therewith to wave down interposing authority, "of course I bow to your authority. But what I was attempting to show was this—"; and then he goes through the whole thing again.

An estimate made during recent weeks shows that each time the Chairman of Committees rises to recall an Irish member to the subject of discussion costs exactly eleven minutes and a half of public time. Nothing is more grateful to a hard-working speech-maker on an occasion like to-night than to

discover Dr. Playfair on his feet. Watching Mr. Biggar's expressive countenance, it is not difficult to know what is going on in the Chair at the table where Dr. Playfair sits spectacled and alert. The trained observer will know exactly when Dr. Playfair is moving uneasily in his chair, will know when he has half risen, and seeing Mr. Biggar resume his seat with that pleased, frank smile which stands in proportion to his countenance as a verandah does to a house front, he knows before he hears the voice that the Chairman is on his feet calling the hon. member's attention to the fact that the amendment now before the Committee relates to the apportionment of fines in districts where murder or outrage has been committed, and has nothing to do with the Cardinal Archbishop.

This interposition is valuable to Mr. Biggar in many ways. It recalls the attention of the Committee, which may have been wandering, it gains for the orator a momentary rest, it wins for him an encouraging cheer when he rises again to point out in fuller detail what he was saying, and to protest that if he had been allowed to finish the sentence, and go into the circumstances of the early education of the Cardinal Archbishop, it would have been clear to the Committee that he was "thoroughly in order."

Sometimes the chairman's interruption may be used in other ways. Mr. Healy can rise, discuss generally the point of order with the Chairman and the Committee, others join in; there is an uproar, and Irish members, properly indignant at this attempt to curtail freedom of speech, and ride roughshod over a minority, move to report progress. This is good for an hour, and at the end Mr. Biggar, with the verandah more than ever prominent on the house front, comes back to the original point, and whilst bowing to the decision of the Chairman, and most anxious to save the time of the Committee, goes back to the schooldays of the Cardinal Archbishop, just to show what he would have said or was going to say when he was interrupted by the hon. gentleman opposite.

When at last Mr. Biggar was got off to bed, under the solemn promise that he should be called very early in the morning, or that if he really could not sleep he might get up in the night and come down, a hush fell upon the assembly. To Mr. Biggar's colleagues, it was by no means certain how far

his irrepressible spirits would suffer the confinement of the bedclothes. The chairman cast many anxious glances at the door. To keep the flies out of the sugar basin or the bees from the honeysuckle were an easy task compared with that of holding back Mr. Biggar from the prospect of an all-night sitting. Who could tell at what moment he might not reappear and take up the interesting narrative of the Cardinal Archbishop at the point where he left off? Visions of the hon. member for Cavan in a white cotton nightcap and insufficient clothing disturbed the Chairman's mind, distracting his attention from Mr. Metge, who previously was making a little running.

In honour of this festive occasion more than one of the Irish members seemed to have dined. Mr. Byrne had arrayed his portly person in dinner dress, and wore a flower in his coat. Neither circumstance succeeded in stimulating the somewhat sluggish flow of Mr. Byrne's ideas. But that from the point of view of Mr. Healy was not to be regretted. The thing was to keep the House sitting all night and make no progress with the Crime Bill. If to that end a stout gentleman with a rose in his coat said nothing with very slow utterance, it was a matter to be commended rather than otherwise. When, therefore, hon. members opposite filled up the pauses in Mr. Byrne's oration with cries of "Divide!" Mr. Healy turned upon them with angry and thunderous cries of "Order!"

A little later he rose, and with calm disregard of the Chairman's repeated injunction to obey the first order of debate and stick to the amendment, he insisted upon lecturing the Committee upon its disorderly behaviour. It is, in truth, touching to notice the infinite solicitude of Mr. Healy for orderly debate and strict observance of Parliamentary etiquette. Order is Healy's first law. To-night Dr. Kinnear happening to enter the gallery to the left of the Chair, and desiring to see what was going on, stood up and looked over, forgetful of the fact that he had his hat on. The hon. and rev. gentleman was greeted with such a shout from Mr. Healy and his shocked colleagues that in the startling surprise of the reception he nearly tumbled over the gallery into the House below. There is nothing Land Leaguers are so eager for as the observance of order by others.

Thus, when Mr. Metge, looking like a curate, attempfed

to speak, his colleagues, as it were, formed a ring round him to protect him from the impatience of gentlemen opposite. The fact is Mr. Metge, carrying out the semblance of a young curate, seemed to preach his first sermon, passages of which he had, in the tremulous excitement of the moment, forgotten. It was clear from the gestures with which he emphasised the inarticulate portions of his speech, that they were somewhere stranded in his mind, and Mr. Healy is quite right in interfering to maintain order in the Committee, since the powers conferred upon the Chairman are ludicrously inadequate to the task. But allowance must be made for a legislative body having before them the prospect of sitting up all night, faced by a young gentleman who fills up long pauses in his oration with emphatic gestures. What made the case harder to bear was the conviction that, judging from the emphasis and variety of gestures, these very portions of Mr. Metge's speech were the gems of the oration.

July 1.—Suspension of twenty-five Irish members.

The House of Commons, which met at two o'clock on Friday afternoon, adjourned on the stroke of eight on Saturday night, having, with the usual interval of two hours between the morning and evening sitting, been in session for thirty hours. Proceedings through the night were, as is usually the case, dull and occasionally sleepy. Mr. Healy, by exception, managed to keep his spirits up, and engaged in occasional altercation with the Home Secretary, whose "stilted and affected indignation" Mr. Parnell rose as early as two o'clock in the morning to denounce. Mr. Gladstone had remained up to this hour, but shortly afterwards left the House, Lord Hartington remaining to assist Sir William Harcourt. At half-past four the gas was put out, and daylight, against which it had been struggling with ever-increasing faintness, flooded the chamber. Sir William Harcourt stating his readiness to accept an amendment standing in the name of Mr. Redmond, Mr. Healy expressed the satisfaction with which he beheld the Home Secretary hail the smiling morn with an appearance of conciliation. An hour later Mr. Callan, who had been hitherto comparatively quiet, came in contact with the Chair, arguing that his comparison of the Home Secretary to a Corinthian

pillar was within the limits of discussion of an amendment moved by Mr. Healy limiting the costs to five shillings in the case of any person summoned for not paying the constabulary charge.

At seven o'clock this morning Sir Stafford Northcote, looking fresh and rosy, entered, and was received with loud cheers. The House now was rapidly filling with the reliefs, whose vigorous appearance was in striking contrast with the jaded countenances of members who had sat through the watches of the night. The Irish members were exceedingly angry with Sir W. Harcourt for taking advantage of them by going to sleep, a charge which he indignantly denied. Mr. Plunket, who had been present during the greater part of the night, testified that, coming back after an absence of two hours, he found the Irish members advancing precisely the same arguments as when he had left. At eight o'clock Mr. Healy accused some member opposite of having a penny whistle. Amid loud cries of "Order!" the Chairman called upon him to withdraw the remark, which he did, substituting a charge of having a pair of castanets. This imputation, it appeared, was Parliamentary, or at least was permitted to pass unchallenged by the Chairman, who had sternly drawn the line at a penny whistle.

At this hour all the amendments to Clause 17 were disposed of, and on the motion that the clause be added to the Bill, Sir W. Harcourt rose, amid loud cheers from the now crowded benches, and asked the House to consider, and people outside to consider, the history of the clause. Fifteen hours—equal to two whole working days—had been occupied in discussing a clause of secondary importance and involving no constitutional principles. Amid renewed cheering he asked whether the time had not come at which the House should take some decisive steps. Mr. Parnell defended the course taken by the Irish members, which he said was "quite fair." Sir Stafford Northcote stated that if there were in contemplation any proposal with a view to expediting the proceedings his support would be given to any reasonable proposition. At this epoch Mr. Shaw Lefevre was in the Chair, having succeeded Mr. Courtney, who relieved Dr. Playfair at one o'clock. At nine o'clock Dr. Playfair came back, and was presently assailed by Mr. Redmond

with the charge of permitting himself to be prompted in his ruling by the Treasury bench.

The nearness of the long-threatening storm was indicated by a significant notice given by Dr. Playfair that in his opinion deliberate and planned obstruction existed in the Committee, and that he might shortly have to submit the names of members engaged in it. Mr. Redmond flippantly declared that he listened to this statement with perfect equanimity, feeling sure that he could not allude to him, and, proceeding to discuss the ruling of the Chair, was twice called to order. As he defiantly continued, Mr. Biddulph rose to order, and the Chairman, in answer to the appeal, named as having been engaged in obstruction Mr. Biggar, Mr. Callan, Dr. Commins, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Healy, Mr. Leamy, Mr. Marum, Mr. Metge, Mr. J. McCarthy, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. O'Donnell, Mr. Parnell, Mr. R. Power, Mr. Redmond, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. Sullivan.

Some of these members formed part of the "day relief," and had not been in their places during the night. Mr. Dillon was absent at the moment. Mr. Biggar, who, in the circumstances described under yesterday's date, had also been absent through the night and had recently returned, sat speechless for some moments, with an air of injured and indignant innocence. Mr. O'Donnell was the first to find his voice. In impassioned tones he denounced the statement just made by the Chairman as an infamy.

"I have," he shouted, "been absent all night, and have been foully named as guilty of obstruction. You've sinned against all the traditions of your office," he proceeded, addressing the Chair amid loud cries of "Order!"

The Chairman quietly remarked that that particular statement he would report specially to the House. In the meantime he reminded the Committee that he had severally named certain members. Mr. Childers moved that the members named should be suspended from the service of the House for the remainder of the sitting. Mr. Biggar, having partially recovered from his astonishment, now rose to order, Mr. Marum being on his legs at the same time. On the question of tellers, Mr. Richard Power and Mr. Redmond, who usually perform that office for the Land League Party, were nominated, but the Chairman declined to accept as tellers any members who had been named.

Eventually Colonel Nolan and Mr. Synan were selected as tellers, and on a division, the motion for the suspension was carried by 126 votes against 27.

The Chairman then left the Chair, and the Speaker being sent for, the circumstances were reported to him. When the Speaker formally put the question of suspension, Mr. Biggar, having found his voice, and in accordance with etiquette (the House now being clear) remaining seated with his hat on, asked why he was named, not having been in the House from twelve o'clock on the previous night till nine that morning. Mr. Callan took the opportunity to accuse the Chairman of being guilty of "an utter falsehood," a remark of which the Speaker took no notice. On a division the suspension was confirmed by 125 votes against 29.

The Speaker, beginning in alphabetical order, first called upon the injured member for Cavan to withdraw, which he quietly did. Mr. Callan, when called upon, took the opportunity to declare that he had been suspended by a false report made by a salaried official of the Government. Without waiting for further command from the Speaker, the rest of the members named rose in a body and left the House, bowing to the Speaker as they retired. Mr. O'Donnell marked his respect for authority by a particularly profound obeisance to the Chair. As soon as they were gone, Dr. Playfair reported that Mr. O'Donnell had insulted the Chair, and after some conversation, Mr. Childers gave notice that on Monday he would move to take the matter into consideration. Mr. Arthur O'Connor moved the adjournment of the House. This was rejected by 156 votes, the Irish minority being now reduced to 14. Mr. Cowen gave notice that on Monday he would move a vote of censure on the Chairman of Committees.

After this the House calmed down again, and proceeded in somewhat humdrum fashion with the business, which was chiefly confined to speeches made by the Irish members still left. Several of the gentlemen expelled took the opportunity of going to breakfast. Some of them, including Mr. Richard Power and Mr. Sexton, returning, occupied seats in the strangers' gallery. Noon had struck before the Committee was allowed to divide on the motion that Clause 17 stand part of the Bill, com-

pleting a period of nineteen hours during which it had been under discussion.

Clause 18 was more rapidly disposed of—that is to say, in three hours and a half. Clause 19 was, on the motion of the Attorney-General, omitted, and motions to report progress then commenced from the Irish quarter. These were met by an announcement from the Premier that the Government were determined before progress was reported to go through the Bill as it stood, leaving new and postponed clauses to another day. He also intimated that the House would on Monday be asked to declare public business urgent. Both these announcements were received with loud cheers.

Shortly after six o'clock cross-motions to report progress and that the Chairman leave the chair were persistently made and divided upon. At length Sir Hussey Vivian, amid general cheering, appealed to the leader of the House not longer to permit the Committee to be parties to this farce. Sir Richard Cross declared it was evident to every one that the course taken by the Land Leaguers was for the purpose of obstruction. Mr. Gladstone concurring in this view, the Chairman named Mr. Byrne, Mr. W. Corbet, Mr. Gray, Mr. Lalor, Mr. Leahy, Mr. A. O'Connor, Mr. O'Kelly, Mr. O'Sullivan, and Mr. Shiel, and on the motion of Mr. Gladstone they were suspended.

Without waiting for the appearance of the Speaker the nine members quitted their seats, and attempted to leave the House, but the House having been cleared for a division, the doors were as usual locked. The Speaker was again sent for, and the process of suspension formally carried out. After this event, which took place on Clause 24, what was left of the Bill was got through after an ordinary measure of opposition on the part of some English members, and just upon the stroke of eight the House adjourned.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MR. BRIGHT'S RESIGNATION.

A Ministerial Crisis—Mr. Cartwright—Mr. Gladstone defiant—Mr. Lambton—Mr. Gladstone and Sir Stafford Northcote—The Chairman of Committees designate—Mr. Bright's Resignation—Some corner Men—Mr. Forster—Mr. Goschen—Mr. Stansfeld—Lord R. Churchill—Lord Selborne and Lord Brabourne—Cetewayo in the House—Some Orators—Mr. Chaplin—Sir W. Harcourt—Lord Elcho—Mr. Biggar's “Friend.”

July 7.—A Ministerial crisis. *Le jour viendra* is the motto of the House of Durham, and at the stroke of six o'clock this afternoon it occurred to the Hon. Frederick Lambton that it had come. The scene had gradually, and of late swiftly, grown from the dulness of an ordinary morning sitting into the fierce heat of a crisis that threatened the fate of the strongest Ministry of modern days. When the House met at two o'clock there was an impression that we were going to spend a pleasant afternoon, to pass the Crime Bill, go comfortably home, and say grace before meat with especial fervour. The Irish members had once more obligingly put themselves out of the way. Being powerless to do further mischief, they had magniloquently—not to say melodramatically—retired from the contest. But, whilst quitting the ring, they had not gone far beyond the limits of the ropes, and now looked down on the House from the side gallery, Mr. Biggar's smile growing broader and broader as the crisis grew more serious.

Mr. Cartwright. It was quite in keeping with the scene that Mr. Cartwright should have begun it. Nobody, not even those who could hear what he was saying, would have imagined that Mr. Cartwright was laying the train of an explosion that would presently shake a mighty Ministry to its foundations. In the strangers' gallery, where his remarks were hopelessly inaudible, it might easily have been thought that this spectacled gentleman was filling up an idle quarter of an hour in the House by the delivery of a professorial address. Perhaps he was a naturalist, and was describing to the House

that remarkable plant the butterwort, which spreads out its gummy leaves to catch flies, which are subsequently devoured by its curious gift of dissolvent acid secretion. Perhaps if he were also a satirist he was drawing a parallel showing how the Conservative Opposition had at this crisis played the part of the butterwort, and how the Whigs represented the unsuspecting fly. Of course Mr. Cartwright was not doing any of these things. He was nervously expressing the hope that the new sub-section to Clause 14 of the Crime Bill, proposed by the Government, would not be accepted by the House. Sir Wm. Hart Dyke, whom there is no difficulty in hearing in any part of the House, plunged in next, and the jubilant cheering of the Conservatives showed there was game at hand.

Mr. Gladstone <sup>defiant.</sup> Mr. Gladstone saw it too, and in one of those moments of irritation which sometimes lead him into personal conflict with the assembly he should lead, he determined violently to stamp out revolt. He was evidently worried and sick, both in mind and body. He had been wrestling with the House just as day was breaking, and had then suffered defeat on a minor matter of arrangement of business, a check of which he had complained with pathetic querulousness. At the end of a weary week, with his mind occupied with the large events of foreign policy, and his soul anguished by the troubles, large and small, but unfailing, that dogged his footsteps in the House of Commons, he had determined, come what might, that he would have no more springing of these conspiracies upon him from the back benches.

"After what has passed," he said, in a tone of voice rarely used, but unmistakable in its meaning, "I cannot speak too early or too plainly."

It was early enough, for only Mr. Cartwright had spoken from the Ministerial camp. But partly through knowledge, and partly by instinct, Mr. Gladstone knew what was pending. As to the plainness of his speech, there followed much anxious inquiry as to its precise meaning. But it was clear enough to all but those who would not understand. The Premier announced that in the event of the Government proposal being defeated, he should hold himself free to take any course that might appear to him to be right.

This was a bold and heavy stroke, and if Ministers had not been taken by surprise by a well-concerted movement, it would doubtless have had the desired effect. If this had been a pitched battle, approached with due preparation, and if the Liberal host had been summoned to a critical division, this desperate appeal to fidelity would not have been made in vain. But the Ministerialists had been caught napping. Only the ordinary whip had been sent out in anticipation of a quiet and unemotional afternoon, and whilst those who were in the secret were careful to be in their places, there were at least fifty stout Gladstonians placidly spending the afternoon elsewhere, unconscious of the mortal peril of their chief. In vain Mr. Forster loyally came to the support of his old colleagues, and, with a generous tribute to Lord Spencer, submitted his own judgment to that of the Minister responsible for the Executive Government of Ireland. In vain Mr. Whitbread, with jubilant air, threw the weight of his influence on the side of the Government. In vain Mr. Brand, with native ingenuousness, declared that he had been converted by the Premier's speech; and in vain Mr. Bright, with a nervousness that betokened his sense of the gravity of the situation, took the House into the confidence of the Cabinet, and gave some interesting and curious details of the history of the clause. Below the gangway the Radicals cheered, but behind Ministers the Whigs sat glum and ominously silent, whilst the Conservatives, feeling an unexpected victory within their grasp, cheered and laughed uproariously.

Mr. Lambton. It was just before Mr. Bright spoke that the House was made conscious of the fact that there was a young gentleman, risen from a seat to the rear of the Treasury bench, who desired to address it. Very few knew him, and, on the Conservative side at least, there was keener anxiety to get to the division than to hear further discussion. But the Speaker had called on the young man with the sallow complexion and the coal-black hair, and he did not seem inclined to abandon anything of his just privilege. The day had come, and here was the man, with his hands resting on his hips, and his eyes wandering over the uproarious assembly. He was evidently nervous, having, possibly, sometimes dreamed of making his maiden speech, but not reckoning it would be delivered in these circum-

stances, and would be of the particular kind he now had in his mind. As the House would not cease its uproar, Mr. Lambton thought he had better begin. So with hands awkwardly disposed on his hips, and his head restlessly moving from side to side, he got out a few sentences. These catching the ear of the House amid the turmoil, turned out to be very brave words indeed, and presently Mr. Lambton had the House quiet and listening. Once when he referred to "my family," and the views they had always held, there was a fresh outburst from the Radical benches. Mr. Samuelson, senior, was exceedingly wrath at this certainly novel kind of Parliamentary argument. "His family!" the member for Banbury ejaculated, scornfully. Mr. Samuelson is a family man himself, and as long as Frome proves true, the House of Commons will be privileged to share his joys. But he felt that whatever he might have thought, he never mentioned his family in the House of Commons—not because it has proved itself well able to speak for itself, but because he does not think it fair to the other members elected under the same constitution to push personal advantages of this kind.

Perhaps, if he had not been so excited by this feeling of honest indignation, Mr. Samuelson might have brought the founder of Mr. Lambton's family in evidence against him. Forty-five years ago, when the Durham Liberals received a memorable check at the General Election for the first Parliament of Queen Victoria, Lord Durham, addressing a county meeting, said, "Having been abroad for a considerable time, I am not prepared to trace all the small and minor causes which have led to the temporary eclipse of your former Liberal ascendancy. Suffice it to say that it has happened, and that, if I live, it shall never happen again." But the first Lord Durham is long dead and passed into history, and the young scion of his race, whilst reasonably proud of the traditions of his family, had forgotten this disposition of its founder. Mr. Lambton had been hurt by the haughty tone of the Premier, and now gave back defiance in response to command.

"If the Government won't carry out the wishes of the majority," he said, with as much apparent unconcern as if he were considering whether he should call a hansom or a four-wheeler, "it would be easy to obtain another Government that will."

It is a bad sign for a leader when Liberals of historic name and tried fidelity speak thus, and Mr. Lambton's remarkable deliverance only too surely presaged the disaster that followed in the division lobby, when, in a House of 401 members, the Government were defeated by a majority of 13.

July 10. — Mr.  
Gladstone and  
Sir Stafford  
Northcote.

Mr. Gladstone's sudden onslaught upon Sir Stafford Northcote to-night, and his almost total annihilation of that amiable personage, were certainly a little startling.

In some respects it was ludicrously like the familiar scene in a pantomime, where, after a general engagement between the forces of law and disorder, the policeman seizes on the smallest and most inoffensive boy within range and carries him off *vi et armis*. Sir Stafford Northcote had been more than usually dull, and had established a more than ordinary claim upon the compassion of his fellow-men. The order had been sent through the Conservative camp that on the Arrears Bill "something must be done." There had been a meeting of the party, at which, with touching confidence, the particular kind of thing to be done was left to the discretion of the leaders. Then a special circular had been sent round, beseeching Conservative members, as they loved the Constitution and hated Mr. Gladstone, to be in their places, not for one night or on one occasion, but continuously through the week, while the Arrears Bill was in Committee. Sir Stafford Northcote had, as Mr. Plunket observed, with an iteration that marked the event as memorable, placed on the paper, in his own name, an amendment on the first clause, and "moved it himself." Rarely, except at Astley's, when the stage has been cleared for the Battle of Waterloo, has there been such tremendous preparation for momentous conflict. Unhappily, when the time came for Sir Stafford Northcote to move this particular amendment, the hour for dinner was also near at hand, and at its approach all the enthusiasm of the Conservatives for their leader, and all their devotion to the Constitution, melted. In an almost empty House, Sir Stafford was left to take his carefully prepared action.

To be put forward with all this bustle of preparation to "move an amendment himself," and then to find that few cared enough about it or about the speaker to stay and listen, was a trifle depressing. He spoke in a low, conversational tone, suit-

able for discursive remarks of this kind, growing feebler in matter and heavier in style as the depression of the half-empty and wholly unsympathetic House acted and reacted upon his own dulness.

It was out of this leaden cloud there flashed the flame of the Premier's wrath. He had sat half reclined on the Treasury bench immediately opposite Sir Stafford Northcote, with eyes half closed, legs crossed, and hands idly resting on each other. He made no note, and seemed not to be paying any more attention to the discourse than any others of the three-score gentlemen who were within earshot of the drowsy hum of the voice at the table. The Premier had not, on the whole, a very pleasant evening. Weighed upon by responsibilities to his country and to his party, he had on Monday to unsay critical words uttered on Friday. At least he might have hoped that his task would not have been rendered more painful by personal impertinence. But in this respect he had counted too much upon the generosity of political opponents. Before the earliest moment at which he could have made his statement, Mr. Balfour, eager for what he regarded in advance as the spectacle of the great Liberal statesman in a position of personal humiliation, interposed, and in studiously malicious terms asked whether it was not time that the feast were spread. It must be stated to the credit of the Conservative party that the laughter and cheers with which this stroke was received came from a very small section. Sir Henry Wolff and Mr. Gorst applauded. Sir Walter Barttelot thought it capital, and Mr. Warton vigorously stoked himself with snuff in the exuberance of his delight. But for the most part the Conservatives sat silent, and perhaps a little ashamed at the spectacle of barren youth jeering at age and authority.

After this had come Mr. Seely's modest introduction of himself as a new member, in the course of which he seized the Premier by the throat and insisted, under threat of moving the adjournment, upon having a delicate question of foreign policy answered forthwith without notice. This exhibition, unprecedented in its way, of insubordination below the gangway, balancing, as it did, Mr. Lambton's exhibition of Friday, irritated the Premier in proportion as it delighted the Conservative Opposition. But he had a task to perform, and it was necessary that he should do it with calmness and dignity.

Accordingly the fire was kept down with whatever strain of will, and the way in which he alluded to, and disposed of, the episode of Friday was unexceptional. But the fire burned all the same, and it was Sir Stafford Northcote's hapless fate that he should, with whatever gentle and unconscious propulsion, have stirred it and made it flame forth. With uplifted voice, denunciatory gesture, and scathing words, the Prime Minister fell upon the leader of the Opposition, who, with hands meekly hidden up his sleeves and head bowed, listened with feelings in which amazement struggled for mastery with the consciousness of perfect innocence.

July 12. — The  
Chairman of  
Committees  
designate.

It is understood that whenever the Conservatives come into office Mr. Warton will succeed Dr. Lyon Playfair in the Chair. In the meantime, he has taken the present incumbent under his especial direction, corrects him when he is wrong, assists him to a right conclusion when he is stumbling forward, and even relieves him from some of his Ministerial functions. To-night, for example, Mr. Warton, desiring to offer a few remarks on a point of order, interposed on the question that an amendment be withdrawn. Having concluded, and being about to resume his seat, Dr. Playfair, with habitual promptitude, put the question again. "Is it your pleasure that the amendment be withdrawn?" But Mr. Warton, even whilst discussing a point of order, has acquired the habit, indispensable to a Chairman, of keeping his eyes all over the Committee in order to watch for indications of intention on the part of members to speak. Thus employed, he had noticed the movements of Mr. Gregory, and correctly interpreted them. As he resumed his seat Dr. Lyon Playfair put the question again. But Mr. Warton, rising and indicating with his finger (as the Chairman does) the hon. member for East Sussex, said in stentorian voice, "Mr. Gregory!" Thereupon the Chairman resumed his seat, and Mr. Gregory, duly authorised, rose and addressed the Committee.

July 15. — Mr.  
Bright's resig-  
nation.

When the questions were disposed of there was a pause, and all eyes were turned to the corner seat of the second bench below the gangway,

where Mr. Bright sat. He had entered shortly after questions commenced, and walking down the House, had stopped short at the Treasury bench, and turning up the gangway, had taken the old seat at the corner of the second bench occupied by him so many years before he assumed office. It was naturally expected that he would now rise and state the reasons for his resignation. But Mr. Bright, who since his entrance had evidently been in a state of great nervous excitement, did not move. The Speaker proceeded to call on the Clerk to read the orders of the day, whereupon there were calls of "Bright, Bright!" chiefly from the Conservative side.

On rising Mr. Bright was received with a cheer from the Liberal benches. He had not, he said, intended to offer any observations on this, to him, new and peculiar occasion. To tell the truth, he had no explanation to make. There seemed nothing to explain and he had nothing to defend. The simple fact was, he could not concur with his late colleagues in their policy with regard to the Egyptian Question. It might be asked why he had not sooner left the Government, to which he might answer that his profound regard for Mr. Gladstone, and for those who sat with him, was such that he was desirous to remain with them to the very last moment. The difference of opinion was fundamental. Had he remained he must have submitted silently to measures he condemned, or must have lived in a state of constant conflict with his colleagues. For forty years he had endeavoured from time to time to teach his countrymen that moral law is not intended only for individual life, but for the life and the practice of States. The present intervention in Egypt was in his opinion a manifest violation of international and of moral law. He could not turn his back upon himself and deny all he had taught during forty years of public life. He asked his judgment and his conscience what part he should take. They pointed it out to him with unerring finger, and he was humbly endeavouring to follow it.

'This speech spoken, more particularly in its personal reference to Mr. Gladstone, in a tone of some emotion, was occasionally cheered, chiefly from below the gangway on the Liberal side.

Mr. Gladstone, who was loudly cheered, said the occasion was not one for arguing a question of difference of opinion

between Mr. Bright and those who were, and who rejoiced to be, his colleagues. But he ventured to assure him that they agreed with him in thinking that the moral law is as applicable to the conduct of States as it is to individuals, and the difference between them was a difference upon a particular case and a particular application of that law. The separation was to the Ministry, as it was to Mr. Bright, an occasion of the profoundest pain. "But," the Premier added, turning round to where Mr. Bright sat, vainly endeavouring to control his emotion, "he carries with him the unbroken esteem, and, upon every other question, the unbroken confidence of his colleagues, and has their best and warmest wishes for his happiness and fame." The incident occupied only eight minutes.

July 21.—Some corner men. The House of Commons is becoming covered with driftwood from partial wrecks of Mr. Gladstone's Ministries. It is as if a comet, passing through the firmament, cast off here and there more or less glittering fragments, which either settled down as fixed stars, or continued on their own responsibility the journey through space. If this sort of thing goes on much longer, it will be absolutely necessary to recast the sitting accommodation with the object of creating more corner seats. On Monday Mr. Bright took the last one available on the Liberal side, and should further cataclysms in the Ministry bring about the retirement either of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre or of Mr. Osborne Morgan, the withdrawer must needs be content with the obscurity of the middle benches.

Mr. Forster. In the corner seat, on the other side of the gangway, sits Mr. Forster, the two ex-Cabinet Ministers guarding the passage up the gangway as Gog and Magog stand in Guildhall. Mr. Bright sits supreme in his seat, Mr. Rylands hanging on at a respectful distance, and darting down on the coveted position only when he is quite sure Mr. Bright has gone for the night. But Mr. Forster still has a fight for the seat with Dr. Lyons. The two cases are, indeed, distinctly different. Mr. Bright has historic connections with the corner seat of the second bench below the gangway. Mr. Forster has no prescriptive right to the seat which, by early and regular attendance, Dr. Lyons had succeeded in marking for his

own. Mr. Forster, as has already been mentioned, is an awkward antagonist in a struggle of this kind. He knows exactly where the corner seat is situated, and his mind is too much occupied with matters of material interest to be quite certain whether, at a particular moment, Dr. Lyons is upon it or not. Accordingly, he sits down; and Dr. Lyons, if he chances to be there, takes the earliest possible opportunity of making his escape. Indeed, after a few lessons of this kind, he has made haste to move when he has observed Mr. Forster tacking down the House like some bulky East Indiaman.

Mr. Goschen. Behind Mr. Forster, in the third corner seat above the gangway, sits Mr. Goschen, completing an ominous concatenation of ex-Cabinet Ministers, supposing they were at any crisis to make common cause in attack on the Ministry. On the last bench, in the corner seat behind Mr. Goschen, Mr. Baxter, when he is in the House, usually sits, and Sir Arthur Otway is to be found in this neighbourhood.

Mr. Stansfeld. Mr. Stansfeld, disgusted with a Liberalism that will neither enfranchise women nor repeal the Contagious Diseases Act, has practically withdrawn from Parliamentary life. When he is present he endeavours to secure the corner seat more usually occupied by Mr. Monk. In the last Parliament a great deal of energy and strategy was displayed by Mr. Monk and Mr. Anderson in the endeavour to obtain the reversion of the corner seat on the upper bench in which Sir Thomas Bazley had grown grey. Now that Sir Thomas has retired, Mr. Monk is chiefly successful in filling his place. The corner seat on the third bench below the gangway, like some of those opposite, is, oddly enough, not personally appropriated. On this bench Radicalism is carried to an extent that frowns upon possession of distinction by any one person. They have all things in common, including the corner seat. But if Radicalism has a preference it is for a lord, and from this coign of vantage Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice is frequently permitted to distil a curious stream composed in equal proportions of Whiggery and Radicalism. Sometimes the genial countenance and portly figure of Mr. Shaw are set forth in this seat, and from it Sir Wilfrid Lawson has delivered his protest against anything with

which he does not chance to agree, and like a true Liberal denounces as iniquitous the convictions of other people.

Most familiar of all figures in corner seats is that of Mr. Dillwyn, on the front bench below the gangway. Since Mr. Dillwyn's searching inquiry into supply under a Conservative Administration helped to bring back the Liberals to power, he has somewhat subsided from the position of prominence he formerly occupied. The Constitution is, on the whole, pretty safe now, he thinks, and the ark of our liberties may be occasionally left unguarded. Whether this feeling of confidence is of itself calculated to have a demoralising effect upon a sturdy Radical is a matter for anxious inquiry. But it is certain that this session Mr. Dillwyn has twice appeared in the House after eleven o'clock in dinner dress. This may, however, be merely a piece of tactics, and may not indicate any falling away from the position of watchfulness. Mr. Dillwyn's peculiar position as an Independent Liberal of unpurchasable fidelity has more than once been made use of by the Government. At times, when it might have appeared that Mr. Gladstone was drifting into difficulties with some section of his following, Mr. Dillwyn has been put up to ask an innocent question, designed to show that current rumours are altogether unfounded, and that the Ministry possess the perfect confidence of the member for Swansea. This attractive appearance of *abandon* on the part of Mr. Dillwyn may be part of a deep scheme to restore or maintain the confidence of the House. There have been cases in the world's history when the inhabitants of a beleaguered town, reasonably suspected of being on the verge of starvation and capitulation, have, as it were, in mere wantonness of possession, thrown over the walls meat and bread. Mr. Dillwyn's appearance in dinner dress, so far from indicating that all is well, may in reality be the last device of a desperate Ministry, anxious above all things to stave off even by a few days or weeks the hour of disruption.

*Lord R. Churchill.* In the corresponding seat across the floor of the House Lord Randolph Churchill sat whilst yet amongst us. Thither he was reverently led when the other night he came back to countenance Mr. Gorst's notice of a vote of censure on the Government, and, in his capacity as leader of

a party in the House, to treat with the Prime Minister for a special day whereon to discuss the resolution. When Lord Randolph Churchill is away a pretty game goes on among the members of his party for the reversion of his seat. If there is one quality more conspicuous in the evenly-balanced minds of the Fourth Party it is modesty. Sir Henry Wolff will not push forward for the seat if Mr. Balfour or Mr. Gorst is at hand. Mr. Balfour observes the same chivalrous self-denial, and it is only with the hope of relieving them from embarrassment, and putting an end to the painful situation, that Mr. Gorst sinks back in the seat. With the same laudable object he leaves his hat on the seat when he temporarily withdraws from the House; whereupon Sir Henry Wolff, with the absence of mind that arises from the constant contemplation of the vast field of foreign politics, gently moves the hat lower down, and takes the seat. Lord Randolph found an additional recommendation in the seat because Mr. Healy, disregarding the titular claims of Mr. Parnell and Mr. Justin McCarthy, appropriated the corner seat behind. From the third seat above waves the blood-red bandana of Mr. Newdegate. Here he sits, as he has sat for more than a quarter of a century, upright, solemn, and sad, weighed down under the growing tribulation of Liberal ascendancy. A strange contrast this between the elderly commoner and the youthful patrician, Mr. Healy sitting between the two as coy and tearful Erin might by chance find herself set between Dignity and Impudence.

July 21. — Lord  
Selborne and  
Lord Bra-  
bourne.

Whether stepping aside from the woolsack to assume his rôle of peer, and his right to take part in debate, or whether rising from the Ministerial bench, the House being in Committee, Lord Selborne always conveys the impression that the slight pause before his speech is filled up by a mute apology to his fellow-men for his presumption in proposing to occupy a very few minutes of their time. When to-night he followed Lord Brabourne, it was by the accidental courtesy of a peer opposite that he found the opportunity, of which he made use in a manner that will be long memorable in the records of the House. Finding another noble lord on his feet, Lord Selborne was meekly resuming his seat when the other gave way. Then,

hurriedly gathering his robes about him, the Lord Chancellor stood at the table, and, nervously glancing around, began his speech.

Lord Brabourne had just sat down with that provoking air of smug self-satisfaction which, perhaps, has something to do with the general desire that he should in the main keep silence. If there were no other peculiar circumstance attaching to Lord Brabourne's addresses to the House of Lords, his early and persistent participation in debate would be sufficient to create resentful feeling. There is no written law on the subject; but there is deeply impressed in the mind of both Houses of Parliament a dislike for the too-frequent interposition of new members. Nothing is surer to check the career of a man, whether commoner or peer, than that he should make undue haste to instruct the assembly to which he was lately inducted. Neither Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen was, nor is Lord Brabourne, capable of understanding this little prejudice. The House of Lords, if it had not known it before, had early opportunity of learning what manner of man the new baron was. Lord Brabourne, very early in his career, rose and competed with other peers for the privilege of addressing the House, and had it yielded to him with some quiet look of well-bred surprise, of which, also, more or less happily for himself, he was unconscious. He had conceived what for English politics is a new and even daring scheme of personal advancement. For a man who had been throughout life a Liberal by profession, who by means of such profession had enjoyed some of the sweets of office when Liberals were in the ascendency, and who being, under whatever peculiar circumstances, made a peer in recognition of services alleged to have been rendered to the Liberal cause—that such a man should range himself on the Liberal side was a matter of course, and if he sought distinction he must find it by sheer superiority. But a Liberal who was said to have importuned his party chief for a coronet, and, having had it tossed to him, straightway turned and bit at the hand that conferred the favour, such an one might confidently count upon leaping into a place of almost absolutely isolated distinction.

This was a bold scheme, and Lord Brabourne has carried it out with great courage. In season and out of season he has lost no opportunity of assailing his late colleagues, whom he

still, with provoking insensibility to hints plainly conveyed, insists upon calling his "noble friends." To-night, following up this course, he interposed in the debate on the Arrears Bill, and made a fresh attack upon the judicial officers entrusted with the administration of the Land Act. He spoke amid chilly silence from the Conservative peers, evidently a little ashamed at advocacy from this quarter, whilst more frankly expressed signs of impatience came from the Liberal side. But Lord Brabourne was not to be angered by these demonstrations, nor disposed to have a life-long friendship disturbed by Lord Granville's colloquial exclamation, "Oh, my goodness!" when he introduced a fresh passage with the remark, "And now as to the Sub-Commissioners."

Uriah Heep meeting Miss Betsy Trotwood's snubs with deprecatory gesture was not more humble than Lord Brabourne before these manifestations from the Ministerial bench. When he sat down, with the consciousness that he had made a favourable impression, Lord Selborne rose. He was nervous and low-voiced at first, but as the thunder of cheers, unaccustomed in the House, broke forth, his figure straightened, his face flushed, his sentences glowed with fire, and with magnificent gesture he pointed the renegade politician to the side of the House on which he should properly sit. It was said, in the buzz of conversation that followed, that never had Lord Selborne come out like this. But it was also agreed that rarely had an honest man such provocation.

Aug. 7. — Cetewayo in the House.

In the House of Commons, as soon as prayers were over, Cetewayo appeared in the gallery, taking his seat over the clock. He was accompanied by four of his own countrymen, amongst whom he was distinguished by his greater size and darker colour. He was dressed in an ordinary blue serge suit, a white pocket-handkerchief being carefully displayed from the breast-pocket of his coat. He also wore a white linen turned-down collar, an article of Western civilisation which contrasted strangely with a black circlet worn round his head. Efforts were evidently made by the interpreter to interest him in the appearance and proceedings of the House; but these did not prove very successful. The King was apparently waiting for something, and his desire

seemed to be satisfied when, at half-past four, Mr. Gladstone entered and took his seat on the Treasury bench. From this moment the Zulu King fixed his regards on the Premier, and appeared immensely delighted with him, laughing in the frankest manner when, in conversation with some of his colleagues, the Premier laughed. As soon as the orders of the day were called on, the King, having seen Mr. Gladstone, left the House and went over to the Lords.

Aug. 11.—Some orators. When Lord Elcho is on his legs, addressing the House of Commons, there is presented for observation an example of the most perfect enjoyment possible to the human race after it has passed the stage of childhood. The only parallel to Lord Elcho making a speech is to be found in that of a happy, careless child engrossed in the companionship of a new toy. It is quite true that Lord Elcho has a monopoly of the pleasure. What he says is not very useful, and, as its delivery is apt to be prolonged, it is sometimes resented as an interference with the progress of business. But as he stands well out on the floor, emphasising his nothingnesses with gestures reminiscent of practice at sword-play, and as he laughs outright at his own witticisms, and altogether looks youthful and ingenuous, it is difficult to be angry with him—at least for the first hour. After that, it is true, boundless good-nature breaks down, and from various points of the House come indications of opinion that we had better now get to business. To these Lord Elcho is happily insensible, and possibilities of shortening his speech are bounded only by the endurance of the audience. Judged by ordinary canons, his addresses have no beginning or middle. If the House pleased they would have no end.

In some points, Lord Elcho's Parliamentary oratory is like Mr. Chaplin's. There is the same ponderous assumption of authority and responsibility, the same emphatic springing of commonplaces on the audience in the hope that they may be seduced into regarding them as original thought, and there is something of the same capacity for discursiveness. But in this latter quality Lord Elcho transcends Mr. Chaplin as Great Britain overshadows the Isle of Wight. In Mr. Chaplin's speeches there are evident traces of laborious preparation of

epigrammatic sentences. Herein Mr. Chaplin travesties his great model with ludicrous effect. No one supposes that those well-remembered phrases which Mr. Disraeli from time to time let drop were manufactured on the spot. Doubtless that sometimes happened, for Mr. Disraeli's were of original manufacture, and when steel smote flint there was often an instantaneous flash ; but when he addressed the House with set orations he brought his little phrases down ready-made, and dropped them in at their proper places. In later years one always knew by familiar signs when and where they were coming. There was a slight pause in the speech, as if his mind were still working upon the phrase, and the House had a pleased sense that it was privileged to look upon the very process of its manufacture. Sometimes the pause was long enough for him to draw a pocket-handkerchief from his coat-tail pocket and toy with it a moment. Once it happened that he drew out the wrong pocket-handkerchief—one not intended for ostentatious display before a picked audience. That was an awkward accident, that would have discomposed many men. But Mr. Disraeli put back the soiled and crumpled thing, and, producing from the other coat-tail pocket a square of spotless cambric edged with black, waved it to and fro, and, as if this were part of the incantation, there flashed forth the happy phrase for which the House had waited.

**Mr. Chaplin.** Mr. Chaplin, in his earnest effort at imitation of a high model, labours under two disadvantages. He has no good things to say, and he has an awkward way of producing his poor things. There are the impromptus set forth on the manuscript he carries in his hand. As in the case of Mr. Disraeli, the House, so far as it is attentive, knows that something is coming. Mr. Chaplin becomes self-conscious and a little nervous. He even tries the handkerchief trick, but pulls it out too soon or too late to be thoroughly effective. Just as a horse ridden by a man with rough hand or uncertain seat goes for a difficult hedge, so Mr. Chaplin goes for his treasured phrase. He takes the leap too soon or too late, or checks himself when going over, and in some way falls. If, with better luck, he gets clear over, the hedge is so disproportionately small as compared with the preparations, that the House laughs at

him instead of with him, which is of much less consequence to Mr. Chaplin than it would be to many men. To imagine the House of Commons laughing at him is a flight beyond his fancy. Since there is laughter, it must be of approval and applause, and with pleased smile and growing ponderosity the orator goes on bridging the space between his last and his next Disraelian phrase.

All this tends to make Mr. Chaplin more actively wearisome than Lord Elcho. There is much doubt whether his lordship makes any preparation for these speeches. It is quite certain that none is necessary. If a man has clear ideas on a given subject, and has thought out an argument thereupon to which he means closely to keep, and around which, whatever is piled up, whether in the way of illustration, adjuration, or invective, forms part of a well-planned whole, it may be desirable to jot down a few heads of discussion ; and here and there a happy phrase that has come to one may be usefully written down.

Sir W. Harcourt. This is the habit of that other eminent orator, Sir W. Harcourt, who can at times be as ponderous as Mr. Chaplin, and as excruciatingly playful as Lord Elcho. In his case, however, as frequently happens to men of a certain limited ability and great natural aptitude for debate, this practice is fraught with danger. It is a bad sign for the Home Secretary's Parliamentary reputation when, approaching the table with intent to make a speech, he lays thereon a bundle of well-filled notes. It is in such cases safe to infer that he is about to make a speech that will please himself a great deal better than it will gratify his hearers. His last effort in this direction was his memorable oration on introducing the Prevention of Crime Bill, perhaps the dreariest episode in a session full of dark days. It will be remembered that in an evil moment Sir William had been led towards the shelf in his library where repose a few works on surgery. A happy thought occurred to him to represent Erin as having somewhere upon her graceful figure a wen or wart, or possibly a carbuncle. "An excrescence," was the general term in which the orator referred to the malady. This was to be cut out, and Sir William Harcourt, taking on a solemn tone, supposed to be appropriate to the operating room of a surgery, and with an air of profound depre-

sion, discoursed for half an hour on this "excrecence," which, with that wealth of language which belongs to him, he declared must be "exorcised," "cut out," and "cauterised." That Sir William Harcourt's phrases are good is proved by the acceptability of his speeches when delivered in the provinces. By those who have not been present, who have not, as it were, been behind the scenes, and heard the rustling of the leaves of the manuscript on which the impromptus were written, the Home Secretary's smart sayings, pointed by plentiful applause and hilarious laughter, are very much enjoyed. In the narrower limits of the House of Commons, however, where things are regarded with microscopic vision that destroys the soothing influence of perspective, Sir William Harcourt's jokes sometimes fall a little flat.

*Lord Elcho.* Lord Elcho is, however, free from these aspersions. What he says is as unpremeditated as the song of the lark, and as inconsequential as the prattle of a child. It is not so tuneful as the one, nor can it, as in the case of the other, be brought to a sudden termination by sending him out of the room. But it is hard to be angry with him, or to disturb by unfriendly look or remark his keen enjoyment of the hour. Only, if Lord Elcho could enjoy himself just as much if he spoke, say, between seven and nine on Tuesdays and Fridays when there has been a morning sitting, the House would be as well pleased, and the world would go on its way much the same.

Aug. 12.—Mr.  
Biggar's  
"friend."

So strictly judicial is Mr. Biggar's frame of mind that when discussing the conduct of the Government he will not even mention his own opinions and views. As it is evident that a debate without communication of these would be greatly lacking in value, he has invented "a friend," a person of the most decided views and of far-reaching information, who knows the secret purposes of the Government and is able to expose their machinations. Mr. Biggar always introduces this "friend of mine" with the prefatory statement that he "will not say whether he is right or wrong," but he is always "a most respectable person," and Mr. Biggar has "full reason to b'leeve him." Mrs. Harris's confidence in Mrs. Gamp is the only parallel to the completeness of

Mr. Biggar's friend's distrust of the Government, and though at the start his rigorously judicial mind induces him to disclaim fixed opinion with respect to his friend's accuracy and soundness of judgment, yet, as he proceeds with his account of his friend's views he gradually yields to the force of conviction, and before he concludes he is, with whatever pain and regret, compelled to admit his belief that there is "a good deal in what my friend says."

Aug. 18.      Parliament adjourned.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE AUTUMN SESSION.

The Gentlemen who delay a Division—Lord Elcho—Mr. Waddy—Mr. Bromley-Davenport—Mr. Storer—Lord R. Churchill and his "respected Leaders"—Collapse of the Autumn Session—Sir H. Wolff—Mr. Dodson—Sir Charles Foster—Prorogation.

Oct. 24.      The House of Commons met to-day to consider the new Rules of Procedure.

Nov. 9.—The  
gentlemen who  
delay a division.

It is remarkable how frequently it happens on the eve of great divisions that a gentleman of mild manners, and of a certain age, interposes with plain desire to make a speech. Such interposition is one of the most aggravating acts open to an individual to practise against the House of Commons. It is as if a toothsome dish, the preparation of which had been slow but seemed sure, was placed before a hungry dog, and just as he is about to bury his nose in it, a hand is put forward and removes the dish. It is easy to understand why the three habitual practitioners of this pleasing device should follow it. Mr. O'Donnell, who reduced it to a science, avowedly desires to make himself obnoxious to the House, and is to be congratulated upon his unqualified success. To Mr. Callan it is an easy way of obtaining notoriety at a convenient hour of the night. To Lord Elcho it affords an

opportunity of gratifying personal vanity, and, incidentally, of polishing the nap of his hat. When his lordship rises to speak in the ordinary course of a debate members incontinently flee. If they want to hear any portion of the oration they know they can come back in half an hour, and Lord Elcho will be still on his feet, enjoying his own jokes with a gusto only less than that with which Mr. Beresford Hope digests his. As for losing the line of continuity, or failing to catch the ordered drift of the argument, that is happily a matter of slight consideration. Lord Elcho is one of those convenient speakers who may be taken up at any stage with equal certainty of comprehending the speech as a whole. It is like a chapter in Ecclesiastes or the Proverbs of Solomon. You may begin at the end and read backwards, or start in the middle and read onwards ; the continuity is equally unbroken.

Lord Elcho. But whilst this freedom of action is all very well for the audience, it is not gratifying to the orator. Lord Elcho, doubtless, feels he has a message to deliver, and would like the world to wait and listen. He cannot lock the doors on a full House when he rises, nor forcibly obstruct the passage of the outward-flowing stream. But at a quarter to one this morning his lordship, glancing with keen military eye over the unsuspecting assembly, felt that he had them in his power. The division was imminent. It could not be delayed beyond half an hour by the most pertinacious speaker, and it might take place at any moment. It certainly was not worth while for members to leave their seats. He had them as surely as the Ancient Mariner had the hapless wedding guest. Only the Ancient Mariner was more merciful than the modern member for Haddingtonshire. He only "stoppeth one of three." Lord Elcho stopped, after a week's unutterably weary debate, 460 gentlemen who, but a moment earlier, had seen deliverance at hand. They howled and shouted and tossed about from side to side. Lord Elcho knew they would. He had seen it often before, and it suited his purpose admirably.

When the uproar grew deafening he carefully brushed the nap of his hat with the palm of his hand, turning it round with a skill that showed how often he had thus practised on the finer feelings of his fellow-men. When the storm lulled, he, with

elaborate prelude, introduced the “point” that had occurred to his mind as the result of a process of intense thought, and at the end of a week’s incessant consideration on the First Resolution. What the “point” was, does not recur to the troubled memory. Perhaps it was lost amid one of the ebullitions of angry impatience that from time to time broke forth. Perhaps it was hopelessly overweighted by the pomposity of its introduction. Perhaps it never was made. Assuredly it does not dwell in the memory. Two points of another kind Lord Elcho certainly made. He succeeded in bringing himself prominently before the House of Commons, and he polished the nap of his hat.

Mr. Waddy. It is not, of course, Lord Elcho to whom reference is made in the opening sentence of these reflections. The particular type of member who occasionally distinguishes himself on these occasions is of a mild and retiring disposition. He is usually elderly, invariably has a white or grey beard, and is always of a quite inoffensive manner. In some respects this description would apply to Mr. S. Danks Waddy, who last night introduced himself to favourable notice as “the youngest member of the House.” That was not a character in which the House was inclined to recognise him. Gentlemen opposite called to mind that, when Mr. Waddy last sat in the House, they were accustomed to greet his appearance with a friendly howl; and forgetful of the long interval, and of his new claim upon their forbearance, they instinctively howled the moment he presented himself. It was in vain that Mr. Waddy diffidently crossed one leg and coyly held a paper fanwise to his face, as if to hide his dimpled blushes. In vain he pleaded the privileges of the youngest member of the House. The youngest member of the House, gentlemen not unreasonably argued with themselves, would do well at least to let the sixth day go down upon his silence. The appeal might be the prayer of the youngest member of the House; but the voice, the pose, the aggravating assumption of superiority and the veiled threat of insistence upon being heard, whether the House liked it or not, were in the manner of Mr. S. Danks Waddy. So members, feigning acute bodily pain, groaned and moaned as if it were an ill-made haggis that Edinburgh had sent them instead of an hon. and learned gentleman.

Mr. Bromley-Davenport.

The gentleman who, as Sir Michael Hicks-Beach resumed his seat after his lugubrious address, rose to continue the discussion, was none other than Mr. Bromley-Davenport, in evening dress, with white beard claiming respect, and eyes dilated with terror in anticipation of the storm he too truly anticipated. It must be said with regret of the House of Commons that there are some aspects in which it cannot be acquitted of a certain kind of cowardice. It knows exactly the men it has to deal with, and on these occasions acts accordingly. When Mr. O'Donnell rises to delay a division, it does not restrain the first flush of angry passion at sight of him. But it knows very well that the longer it howls the longer will the interruption continue. Mr. O'Donnell will say everything he has to say before he sits down, and interruptions may even operate in the direction of suggesting fresh topics to him. It is the same with Mr. Callan and Lord Elcho. Evidence of distaste on the part of the House is to them exactly as added fuel to a fire, and, after an angry protest, the wisdom of suffering in silence is acknowledged. When the House catches, as it sometimes oddly does, a gentleman of the mild aspect and eminently respectable appearance of Mr. Bromley-Davenport, it falls upon him with resistless ferocity.

Mr. Storer.

There have been times when, just on the eve of a division, there has risen from behind the front Opposition bench a short, slight, elderly gentleman of inoffensive appearance, and, with a great gasp of astonishment, the House has realised the fact that this is Mr. Storer, who wants to say a few words. The last time Mr. Storer was noticed in Parliamentary life was on the eve of the final division on the Arrears Bill. Some thoughts on local taxation and the maintenance of British high roads, long smouldering in his mind, inopportune happened to strike fire at the very moment the Speaker was about to put the question. Mr. Storer rose and said—

“Before the question is put I——.”

More the House has not heard to this day. There was a moment of terrible silence, such as that which in tropical countries precedes the actual burst of the tornado. The great throng amid which Mr. Storer stood drew in their breath. Teeth

were set, eyes flashed—first in astonishment, then in rage—and there rattled round the quiet head of the member for South Nottinghamshire an inarticulate roar. Mr. Storer's lips moved for some moments with that helpless mechanical motion by which a fish gasps when it has just been landed. He was probably continuing his speech, and doubtless concluded it to his own satisfaction, for at the end of a space of seven minutes, during which the roar never ceased, he resumed his seat.

Mr. Bromley-Davenport had probably witnessed this scene. But he had made up his mind to face whatever might come of doing his duty. The House roared; Mr. Bromley-Davenport's lips moved, and his right hand shook defiance at the turbulent throng. He would deliver his message, though the heavens fell, broken up by this thunderous outbreak. Here, again, it is only conjecture that permits the conclusion that the message was delivered in its entirety, and with its full significance. What is certain is that Mr. Bromley-Davenport sat down and mopped his head with his pocket-handkerchief, whilst the House stormed at Lord Elcho, roared at Mr. Newdegate, and finally subsided when the Speaker rose to put the question.

Nov. 17.—Lord R.  
Churchill and  
his "respected  
leaders."

Had Lord Randolph Churchill happened to sit for Woodstock in the last years of the Long Parliament, it is certain that a promising and pleasing career would have been brought to an abrupt conclusion. Oliver Cromwell was just the kind of man Lord Randolph "could not abear," and it is not likely that Oliver Cromwell would have taken kindly to Lord Randolph. There is nothing new under the sun, and there was a Fourth Party in the Long Parliament. There were three then as now. Intemperate Haselrigge, Peppery Scott, and Future-Renegade Robinson, Mr. Carlyle calls them, with that genial choice of adjectives which distinguishes his style. On the 4th of February, 1657, "about eleven in the morning," Peppery Scott was "just about to attempt yelping out some new second speech," when Cromwell sent Black Rod to summon the Commons, and there and then dissolved them, subsequently finding occasion to dissolve the line of continuity between Peppery Scott's head and his shoulders. There is no reasonable doubt that had Lord Randolph been born 200 years ago he would have been the

Peppery Scott of the Long Parliament, with his inexhaustible series of speeches, whilst Sir Drummond Wolff might have filled the part of Haselrigge, and Mr. Gorst might, with some modification, have stood for the shrewdly calculating Robinson. A renegade the member for Chatham could never be, since the charge implies some sudden facing about from principle, and Mr. Gorst has never enthusiastically championed either great political party, finding enough to do in minutely criticising both.

Fortunately for Lord Randolph and the world his lines have fallen in more pleasant places. Whatever may on occasions be the secret hankering of Mr. Gladstone, he has not the power of placing Lord Randolph's head on Temple Bar, as Peppery Scott's was finally put by the man whose soul he had vexed with motions for adjournment, inconvenient questions, and interminable speech-making. The assured position of the House of Commons, and the boundless freedom secured for members, place all on a level, and Impudence can shrilly bark at the heels of Dignity without fear of consequences. Lord Randolph differs in this important respect from his prototype of the Commonwealth, that he barks all round the House with charming impartiality. Peppery Scott confined his insults, innuendoes, and open attacks to the Lord Protector, and was not unsuspected of having ulterior views with respect to the Stuarts. Lord Randolph girds chiefly at Mr. Gladstone, because he is the highest and most attractive game. But he has not the slightest objection to turn, with or without occasion, and rend any of his hon. or right hon. friends on the benches behind.

“ As far as my recollection goes ” (to quote Mr. Gladstone's carefully-chosen language to Lord Brabourne, who asked him to say whether it was true that he, Lord B., had begged for a peerage), Mr. Biggar is the only prominent member of the House who has not felt Lord Randolph's claws. Between these two eminent men there has always existed a remarkable bond of friendship. When Lord Randolph is on his legs, Mr. Biggar's expressive countenance shines with appreciative delight. When Mr. Biggar speaks, Lord R. is attentive and applauds. He was once known to refer to him as “ my hon. friend the member for Cavan.” This excited some ribald laughter, and has not been repeated. But the kind of relations whose existence it

indicated still continue, and but for unconquerable fidelity to national principles, which might sometimes clash with the Constitutionalism of the Fourth Party, Mr. Biggar would ere this doubtless have taken his seat on the front bench, and completed the quadrilateral sometimes broken by the erratic movements of Mr. Balfour.

With this one exception, Lord Randolph is free from entangling scruples of party ties or personal attachments. A Parliamentary *sapeur*, nothing is sacred to him—not even the cherished designs of the faithful and attached legal wing of his party. It cannot be forgotten how, when Mr. Gorst, after much study, produced a measure relating to the Recovery of Small Debts, Lord R. Churchill spoke slightly of it, if, indeed, he did not take active measures to bring about its failure. What is certain is that, for the time, the Fourth Party was dissolved. There is a limit to the most patient endurance of capricious personal superiority. No one can say what angry, indignant passion burns in the breast of the pantaloon when, time after time, he is knocked over or otherwise maltreated by his younger and more active companion. It is possible that the length of the scenes at pantomime time is governed by this consideration. A little more and the pantaloon would turn and let it be fully understood that there had been quite enough of this kind of thing. But the curtain is dropped or the scene changed just in time, and before it is renewed the pantaloon has had time to remember his position and recover his temper. In political life it is different, and when Lord R. Churchill contemptuously turned up his nose at the Recovery of Small Debts Bill, Mr. Gorst felt that the limit of human patience had been passed, and for awhile the Fourth Party was dissolved into its elements—for it was, of course, impossible for Sir H. Wolff to carry it on by himself.

After this evidence of absolute freedom from embarrassing ties, it is a small matter to consider Lord Randolph's persistent attacks upon the authority of the titular leader of the Opposition. This last fact is explained by small-minded critics, who suggest that the member for Woodstock would himself lead the party, and that, as a preliminary thereto, he is resolved to undermine the influence of the present incumbent of the office. But it is not only at Sir Stafford that Lord Randolph

will upon occasion, and sometimes without occasion, run a-muck. Witness the scene the other night with Sir R. Cross. Lord Randolph was discussing an amendment moved by the Prime Minister as a consequence of some other amendments just accepted by the House. Naturally this was not in print, and Lord Randolph, in discussing it, was at a loss to recall the terms in which it was drawn up. In an ordinary way that would not be a matter of much consequence. Emanating from Mr. Gladstone it was sure to be bad. Still there were conveniences in having the text before one, as furnishing fuller particulars for picking holes in it. Sir Richard Cross had done what all members intent upon serious debate do. He made a note of the amendment as submitted by the Premier and read out from the Chair.

With a shrewd idea of propitiating evil influences, Sir R. Cross made haste to place his manuscript at the disposition of the noble lord. Sir Richard was about temporarily to fill the place from which Sir Stafford Northeote had retired, broken down in spirit and in body. It would be a good thing to propitiate Lord Randolph on the threshold of his new undertaking. So, with an ingratiating smile, he passed his notes to the young lord, standing, as is his wont, at the corner seat below the gangway, and in the very centre of the House, the pivot on which all its business turns. The consequences were much akin to what followed in the case of the man who, running away from a bear, remembered he had a bun in his pocket, and stopped to present the refreshment to his pursuer. As long as Sir R. Cross was obscure he was unnoticed. But the moment he was brought especially under the notice of this dreadful young man he was snapped up.

"A pretty pass we've come to in the House of Commons," said Lord Randolph, daintily holding Sir Richard's notes between finger and thumb, "when we have to consider amendments passed about from hand to hand on dirty bits of paper."

The smile faded from Sir Richard's countenance, and he assumed an aspect befitting an outraged K.C.B. He had meant well, had gone out of his way to pay a personal deference to a young member of his party, and this was the return—to have his notes characterised as "dirty bits of paper!" Lord Randolph, perceiving the annoyance on the face of the knight,

presently returned to the subject, and, bending a look of scorn upon the right hon. gentleman, once more denounced the necessity of hon. members having to finger "dirty bits of paper."

It is this catholicity of aggravation that endears Lord Randolph Churchill to a considerable section of the House. That a man sitting on the right hand of the Speaker should attack members sitting opposite is common enough. Scarcely less common is the attitude of opposition from a member sitting on either side towards his own political friends. A member, however personally insignificant, acquires immediate prominence by forcibly attaching his name to that of a distinguished member of the House, and in proportion as there is native ability in the assailant so his prominence increases. Mr. Disraeli was, perhaps, not the first to discover this secret, though he was first to reduce its practice to a science. Since then it has been habitually practised with more or less success. Mr. Bentinck, when he was younger and less heavily weighted with concern on account of inadequate reserves in the navy, used to try it on with Mr. Disraeli himself. Mr. Lowe made his political fortune by assailing his friends on the Treasury bench, and Mr. Horsman died wondering why he should have failed when he followed in the same steps. Lord Randolph Churchill improves upon this, inasmuch as he indiscriminately attacks everybody, not even sparing Mr. Newdegate, that venerable and venerated defender of order in the House of Commons, of whom he observed the other night that he had more often moved the adjournment at question time than any other member. It is true that this is not quite a new departure in modern Parliamentary life. Lord Randolph Churchill learnt it from the Irish members, who gained their prominence and their power from this habit of untrammelled attack. But it is new, and some members even think it nice, to have the son of a duke thus comporting himself.

Dec. 1.—Collapse  
of the Autumn  
Session.

Members who had paired for the dinner hour to-night, and between ten and eleven came slowly downward from the West in fulfilment of their engagement, were more or less agreeably surprised to find it was all over. Those who had left the Autumn Session between half-

past seven and eight a lusty infant, with every promise of long life, came back to find it dead, and only waiting the ceremony of interment. Like much else connected with the Autumn Session, it was the unexpected that had happened in the matter of its decease. At half-past seven there were still scores of amendments to be discussed and divided upon. The capacious intellect of Lord Randolph Churchill had lightly put together a whole scheme, compact in every part. With much airy grace he submitted it in this penultimate hour, as a substitute for the Ministerial proposal of nominating Standing Committees. This, of itself, held the promise of prolonged debate. The distinguished author of the scheme did it full justice in the lucid speech by which he unfolded it. The House listened with polite assumption of attention and almost suicidal efforts to repress a yawn. But it was evidently of the opinion that, since the chances of acceptance of this well-considered proposal were exceedingly remote, the exposition of its details might without damage to the State be considerably curtailed.

Sir H. Wolff. One rapt listener Lord Randolph had, in the person of Sir Henry Wolff. The details of an elaborate scheme for electing Standing Committees were not quite so much to his taste as some of those personal attacks upon Mr. Gladstone in which his chief delights. Still, with some people in some frames of mind the sound of a particular human voice is always pleasing, and no music is sweeter to the ear of the eminent diplomatist who represents Portsmouth than the tones of Lord R. Churchill. Seated on the extreme edge of the bench, with arms folded and face beaming through his spectacles, Sir Henry Wolff surveyed members on the benches opposite to see what they thought of this. Here were breadth, profundity, and statesmanlike ability! The detractors of genius had said that Lord Randolph's chief claim to notice was the possession of a sharp tongue and the absence of consideration for other people's feelings. Yet here, with an ease and readiness not excelled by Mr. Gladstone in unfolding his Budget, he was making clear to the lowest intellect an elaborate scheme which he had thought out whilst others slept. It is true that a little later Sir William Harcourt pointed out that the scheme was singularly like one propounded by Mr. Frederick Harrison in a

magazine article. Unhappily, when this malicious hint was dropped, Sir Henry Wolff had fired his shot, and could not speak again, and to Mr. Gorst was left the duty of castigating the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. Dodson. Sir Henry Wolff had fallen upon Mr. Dodson, who, as he hotly complained, had summarily dismissed a scheme drawn up with so much care, and propounded with such lucidity. But Mr. Dodson has an off-hand manner which leads him habitually thus to deal with proposals submitted from the other side. He is the kind of man who would speak disrespectfully of the equator. If Newton had had a seat on the Opposition benches, and had thence described his theory of cross gravitation, Mr. Dodson would have taken inaccurate notes, and would therefrom have proceeded to deliver a speech so heavy, that the hapless philosopher would have abandoned his scheme on consideration that he was not to hear the whole of it. The debate on Procedure, if notable for nothing else, would be memorable as having brought into fuller light the amazing ponderosity of the President of the Local Government Board. The present Parliament knows comparatively little of Mr. Dodson. He has been in charge of a Rivers Conservancy Bill, which, by natural consequence, has failed through two sessions to make any way. But his chief part has been played when he has sat upon the Treasury bench and looked wise. This he does with a natural ease exceeding that of any other member of the House, except perhaps, Mr. Eugene Collins.

Disillusion follows when Mr. Dodson opens his mouth. This he has frequently done during the debates on Procedure now happily closed, and the House has gained a new view of the connection between Dodson and Fogg. For the most part Mr. Gladstone has borne the full burden of the debate on his own shoulders. But there have been times when the rules of the House forbade him to make a second speech on an amendment, and he has had to put up some one else. As a former Chairman of Committees, Mr. Dodson has seemed an appropriate person; but it is scarcely too much to say that he has on no occasion interposed without contributing muddlement to the proceedings. This has been the more marked on occasions when he has made

notes of what preceding speakers have said. "Well, that is the effect of what the right hon. gentleman said," he protested the other night, when a murmur of bewildered astonishment arose from the House as he read from his notes a sentence which he attributed to Mr. Gibson.

"I am obliged to the right hon. gentleman for the explanation," Mr. Gibson said, with grave politeness; "I certainly did not recognise the words."

Fortunately Mr. Dodson, not having had the opportunity enjoyed by Sir William Harcourt of studying Lord Randolph's scheme when it appeared in print, and was claimed by other authorship, early gave up the effort to comprehend it. He had made a few notes, but, after gazing forlornly at them from various points of view, judiciously gave up the effort to comprehend them. Therefore, he took refuge in that summary dismissal which vexed the loyal heart of Sir Henry Wolff, and prematurely brought him to his feet.

Another and a less stolid personage had been cut to the quick by the lash of Lord Randolph's tongue. If you strike out indiscriminately all round, some one is sure to be hit. Lord Randolph was a little petulant to-night, missing the chief impetus to his humour, the grindstone on which he sharpens his wit. It has more than once, in times of stoppage of public business in the House of Commons, been suggested that if Mr. Gladstone could be taken away and put to bed the progress of business would be sensibly accelerated. The soundness of this suggestion was triumphantly vindicated to-night. The Premier was absent, his colossal strength having temporarily given way, and his indomitable energy momentarily succumbed. The consequence was seen in the appearance of the House, and was felt in the issue of the night's business. Lord Randolph's spirits flagged, and his speech fell flat. There was no one to bait, no eager, impulsive figure watchful on the Treasury bench, ready to spring up and break nuts with Nasmyth hammer. The eagle which, in spite of the proverb to the contrary, will persist in catching flies, was in its nest, tamed by sudden sickness. In short, there were no opportunities for fun, and the House, which must have something to do, turned itself to business, and was astounded at the rapidity with which it may be despatched.

Sir Chas. Foster. Lord Randolph, feeling lonesome in the absence of the Premier, looked about for some one else to attack, and bethought him of Sir Charles Foster. At that moment the hon. baronet was in a remote corridor looking for his hat. But friends are always to be found to convey to others more or less accurate reports of nasty things said about them. Sir Charles was interrupted in his search, just at the moment when it promised to be crowned with success, by the news that Lord Randolph had been commenting upon the ties by which he (Sir Charles) was bound to the Treasury bench. It was felt that this must be seen to. The search—more persistent and almost of equal duration with that which gropes after the North Pole—was abandoned ; and, with a languid access of interest, the dozen gentlemen who at this moment formed the House of Commons beheld Sir Charles walking with dignified steps up the House, casting on Lord Randolph Churchill, as he passed the gangway, a glance that would have withered any one less frivolous. Sir Charles's speech was dignified, and even touching. Lord Randolph listened with an affectation of indifference, not too successfully worn. He felt that, in the recklessness of the moment, he had gone a step too far. Perhaps this consciousness had something to do with what followed. However it be, after Sir Charles Foster had made an end of speaking, and having satisfied himself that Mr. Dodson was wearing his own hat, had gone in fresh search of his own, the languid proceedings further drooped, and at twenty minutes to nine finally died in the fog that enwrapped the building.

Dec. 2.—Proration. To-day Parliament was prorogued with the meagre ceremony that is usual when the work is done by Lords Commissioners.

#### CALENDAR OF THE SESSION.

##### FEBRUARY.

<p>1. Tues.—Parliamentary Oath (Mr. Bradlaugh). Resolution, <i>Sir S. Northcote</i>. Mr. Bradlaugh ordered to withdraw.</p> <p>Privilege (Arrest of Messrs. Parnell, &amp;c.). Motion, <i>Mr. Gray</i>. Negatived. Ayes, 45. Noes, 174.</p> <p>H. M. Speech. Address thereon. Debate adjourned.</p> <p>2. Wed.—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment (Condition of Ireland), <i>Mr. P. Smyth</i>. 2nd Debate.</p>	<p>9. Thurs.—H. M. Speech. Address. Division on Mr. Smyth's Amendment—For, 37. Against, 93. Another Amendment (Action of Executive in Ireland), <i>Mr. J. McCarthy</i>. 3rd Debate.</p> <p>10. Fri.—H. M. Speech. Address. 4th Debate.</p> <p>13. Mon.—H. M. Speech. Address. 5th Debate.</p> <p>14. Tues.—H. M. Speech. Address. 6th Debate. Division on Mr. McCarthy's Amendment. For, 30. Against, 98. Address agreed to.</p>
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## FEBRUARY (continued).

15. *Wed.*—H. M. Speech. Report of Address. Debate adjourned.

16. *Thurs.*—H. M. Speech. Report of Address. 2nd Debate.

17. *Fri.*—H. M. Speech. Report of Address agreed to.

20. *Mon.*—Business of the House (1st Resolution). Amendment, *Mr. Marriott*. 1st Sitting.

21. *Tues.*—Northampton (New Writ). Motion, *Mr. Labouchere*. Amendment, *Lord R. Churchill*. Amendment and Motion Negatived. Mr. Bradlaugh signs paper at Table and takes his seat. Motion for a New Writ, *Lord R. Churchill*. Debate adjourned.

22. *Wed.*—Northampton (New Writ). Debate on Motion. Mr. Bradlaugh again takes his seat. Motion for his expulsion, *Sir S. Northcote*. Division—Ayes, 291. Noes, 83.

23. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Supplementary Estimates.

24. *Fri.*—Ditto.

27. *Mon.*—Land Law (Ireland) Act. Motion, *Mr. Gladstone*. 1st Debate.

28. *Tues.*—Meath Election (Mr. Davitt). Motion, *Mr. Attorney-General*. Division—Ayes, 242. Noes, 29.

## MARCH.

1. *Wed.*—Agricultural Holdings (Distress) Bill. *Mr. Blennerhassett*. Debate adjourned.

2. *Thurs.*—Land Law (Ireland) Act. *Mr. Gladstone's* Motion. 2nd Debate.

3. *Fri.*—Supply: Civil Service Supplementary Estimates.

6. *Mon.*—Mr. Bradlaugh. Motion reaffirming Resolution of 7th Feb., *Sir Stafford Northcote*. Amendment, *Mr. Marjoribanks*. Division—For, 242. Against, 257. Motion agreed to.

Her Majesty. Attempt on Life. Address.

Land Law (Ireland) Act. *Mr. Gladstone's* Motion. 3rd Debate.

7. *Tues.*—Trade. Motion, *Mr. Storer*. House counted out.

8. *Wed.*—Criminal Law Amendment Bill. *Mr. Hopwood*. Bill read 2<sup>o</sup>.

9. *Thurs.*—Land Law (Ireland) Act. *Mr. Gladstone's* Motion. 4th Debate. Division—Ayes, 303. Noes, 235.

10. *Fri.*—Arrest of Mr. Rorke. Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. Healy*. Supply: Civil Service Supplementary Estimates.

13. *Mon.*—Supply: Army Estimates. Statement, *Mr. Childers*.

14. *Tues.*—Navy (Fitters, &c.). Motion, *Mr. Broadhurst*. Withdrawn.

Metropolitan Fire Brigade. Motion, *Sir H. S. Ibstock*. House counted out.

15. *Wed.*—Municipal Franchise (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. McCoan*. Bill Read 2<sup>o</sup>.

16. *Thurs.*—Supply: Navy. Statement, *Mr. Trevelyan*.

17. *Fri.*—Army Annual Bill. *The Judge Advocate-General*. Read 2<sup>o</sup>.

Supply: Education Vote, *Mr. Mundella's* Statement.

18. *Tues.*—Adjournment (Easter). Motion. Crime (Ireland). Observations, *Mr. Gorst*.

17. *Mon.*—Supply. South Africa (Cetewayo). Motion, *Mr. Gorst*. Withdrawn. Army Estimates.

18. *Tues.*—Papal See (Diplomatic Communication). Motion, *Sir H. D. Wolff*. Negatived.

19. *Wed.*—Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Leahy*. Parliamentary Election Expenses Bill. *Mr. A. Dilke*. Committed on Division—For, 87. Against, 85.

20. *Thurs.*—Mr. C. Lloyd. Circular. Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. Sexton*. Supply: Navy Estimates.

21. *Fri.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

24. *Mon.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Mr. Gladstone*. Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. *Mr. Attorney-General*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.

25. *Tues.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. 2nd Sitting. Debate adjourned.

26. *Thurs.*—Lunacy Laws. Motion, *Mr. S. Leighton*. Division—For, 34. Against, 81.

26. *Wed.*—Land Law (England) Amendment Bill. *Mr. Redmond*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.

27. *Thurs.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. 3rd Sitting. Bill committed.

28. *Fri.*—£1 Bank Notes. Motion, *Mr. W. Fowler*. Negatived.

Civil Service (Private Secretaries). Observations, *Mr. A. O'Connor*.

## APRIL.

3. *Mon.*—Army Annual Bill. *The Judge Advocate-General*. Read 2<sup>o</sup>.

Supply: Education Vote, *Mr. Mundella's* Statement.

4. *Tues.*—Adjournment (Easter). Motion. Crime (Ireland). Observations, *Mr. Gorst*.

17. *Mon.*—Supply. South Africa (Cetewayo). Motion, *Mr. Gorst*. Withdrawn. Army Estimates.

18. *Tues.*—Papal See (Diplomatic Communication). Motion, *Sir H. D. Wolff*. Negatived.

19. *Wed.*—Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Leahy*. Parliamentary Election Expenses Bill. *Mr. A. Dilke*. Committed on Division—For, 87. Against, 85.

20. *Thurs.*—Mr. C. Lloyd. Circular. Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. Sexton*. Supply: Navy Estimates.

21. *Fri.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

24. *Mon.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Mr. Gladstone*. Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. *Mr. Attorney-General*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.

25. *Tues.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. 2nd Sitting. Debate adjourned.

26. *Thurs.*—Lunacy Laws. Motion, *Mr. S. Leighton*. Division—For, 34. Against, 81.

26. *Wed.*—Land Law (England) Amendment Bill. *Mr. Redmond*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.

27. *Thurs.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. 3rd Sitting. Bill committed.

28. *Fri.*—£1 Bank Notes. Motion, *Mr. W. Fowler*. Negatived.

Civil Service (Private Secretaries). Observations, *Mr. A. O'Connor*.

## MAY.

1. *Mon.*—Business of House (1st Resolution). 6th Sitting.  
 2. *Tues.*—Irish Policy of the Government. Ministerial Statement, *Mr. Gladstone*. Oxford University (Jesus College Statutes). Motion, *Mr. H. Vivian*. Withdrawn.  
 3. *Wed.*—Board Schools (Scotland) Bill. *Sir H. Maxwell*. Withdrawn.  
 4. *Thurs.*—Irish Policy of the Government. Statement on Resignation, *Mr. W. E. Forster*. Municipal Corporations Bill. *Mr. Hibbert*. Committed.  
 5. *Fri.*—Postal Communication (Aden, &c.). Motion, *Mr. Slagg*. School Board Rates. Observations, *Mr. R. Yorke*.  
 6. *Mon.*—Assassination of Lord F. Cavendish and Mr. Burke. Adjournment of House.  
 9. *Tues.*—Municipal Corporations Bill. Committed.  
 10. *Wed.*—Capital Punishment Bill. *Sir J. W. Pease*. Committed. Licensing Law (Scotland) Bill. *Lord C. Campbell*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.  
 11. *Thurs.*—Prevention of Crime (Ireland). Motion for Bill, *Sir W. Harcourt*. Division—For, 327. Against, 22. Bill Read 1<sup>o</sup>.

12. *Fri.*—Grand Jury System (Ireland). Motion, *Mr. Healy*. Negatived. Supply: Army Estimates.  
 15. *Mon.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committed. 1st Sitting. Arrears of Rent (Ireland). Motion for Bill, *Mr. Gladstone*. Bill Read 1<sup>o</sup>.  
 16. *Tues.*—Irish Policy of the Government. Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. A. Balfour*.  
 17. *Wed.*—Poor Removal (Ireland) Bill. *Sir H. Bruce*. Division on 2nd Reading—For, 91. Against, 172.  
 18. *Thurs.*—Prevention of Crime (Ireland). 2nd Debate on the 2nd Reading.  
 19. *Fri.*—Prevention of Crime (Ireland). 3rd Debate. Division—For, 333. Against, 45. Museums (Opening of, on Sundays). Motion, *Mr. G. Howard*. For, 83. Against, 208. Civil Services (Vote Account).  
 22. *Mon.*—Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill. 1st Debate on 2nd Reading.  
 23. *Tues.*—Ditto. 2nd Debate. Division—For, 269. Against, 157. Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Bill. 1st Debate on going into Committee.  
 24. *Wed.*—Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Debate on going into Committee.  
 25. *Thurs.*—Ditto. 3rd Debate. Division—For, 344. Against, 47.  
 26. *Fri.*—Ditto. Committee. 1st Sitting.

## JUNE.

1. *Thurs.*—Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 2nd Sitting.  
 2. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 3rd do.  
 5. *Mon.*—Ditto. Ditto. 4th do.  
 6. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 5th do.  
 7. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 6th do.  
 8. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 7th do.  
 9. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 8th do.  
 12. *Mon.*—Ditto. Ditto. 9th do.  
 13. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 10th do.  
 14. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 11th do.  
 15. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 12th do.

16. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 13th do.  
 19. *Mon.*—Ditto. Ditto. 14th do.  
 20. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 15th do.  
 21. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 16th do.  
 22. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 17th do.  
 23. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 18th do.  
 26. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates.  
 27. *Tues.*—Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 19th Sitting.  
 28. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 20th do.  
 29. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 21st do.  
 30. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 22nd do.

## JULY.

1. *Sat.*—Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Bill. (Suspension of Members.) Committee. 22nd Sitting.  
 3. *Mon.*—Business of the House (Urgency). Motion, *Mr. Gladstone*. Division—For, 239. Against, 31. Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 23rd Sitting.  
 4. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 24th do. Bill reported.  
 5. *Wed.*—Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill. Debate on going into Committee adjourned.  
 6. *Thurs.*—Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill. Division on going into Committee—For, 283. Against, 208.  
 7. *Fri.*—Prevention of Crime (Ireland) Bill. Considered and Read 3<sup>o</sup>.  
 10. *Mon.*—Business of House. Statement, *Mr. Gladstone*. Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.  
 11. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd do.  
 12. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 3rd do.  
 13. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 4th do.  
 14. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 5th do.  
 15. *Sat.*—Electric Lighting Bill. Committee. Bill reported. Educational Endowments Bill. *Mr. Mundella*. Read 2<sup>o</sup>.

15. *Sat.*—Statement on Resignation, *Mr. Bright*.  
 17. *Mon.*—Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 6th Sitting.  
 18.—*Tues.*—Egypt (State of Affairs). Motion for Adjournment, *Sir H. D. Wolff*. Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 7th Sitting.  
 19. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 8th do. Bill reported.  
 20. *Thurs.*—Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill. Considered.  
 21. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. Bill Read 3<sup>o</sup>.  
 22. *Sat.*—Educational Endowments (Scotland) Bill. Committee. Bill reported.  
 24. *Mon.*—Resolution (Priority to Government Orders), *Mr. Gladstone*. Supply: (Egypt). Vote of Credit. Civil Service Estimates.  
 25. *Tues.*—Supply: (Egypt). Vote of Credit.  
 26. *Wed.*—Supply: (Egypt). Vote of Credit.  
 27. *Thurs.*—Supply: (Egypt). Vote of Credit. Resolutions to be reported.  
 28. *Fri.*—Customs, &c., Bill. Committee. Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 31. *Mon.*—Customs, &c., Bill. Committee. East India (Expedition to Egypt). Resolutions, *Marquis of Hartington*. Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

## AUGUST.

1. Tues.—Supply : Navy Estimates.	10. Thurs.—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.
2. Wed.—Educational Endowments (Scotland) Bill. Considered and Read 3 <sup>rd</sup> .	11. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto.
3. Thur.—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.	12. Sat.—Supply : Report.
4. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto.	14. Mon.—India. Financial Statement, <i>Marquis of Hartington</i> .
5. Sat.—Entail (Scotland) Bill. Committee. Royal Irish Constabulary Bill. Read 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	15. Tues.—Married Women's Property Bill. Considered.
7. Mon.—Supply : Army and Civil Service Estimates.	16. Wed.—The Appropriation Bill. Read 3 <sup>rd</sup> .
8. Tues.—Arrears of Rent (Ireland) Bill. Consideration of Lords' Amendments. Supply : Civil Service Estimates.	17. Thurs.—Privilege (Mr. Gray's Commitment). Debate thereon.
9. Wed.—Supply. Motion (Suspension of Irish Members), <i>Mr. Cowen</i> .	18. Fri.—The Appropriation Bill. Royal Assent.

## OCTOBER.

24. Tues.—Business of the House. Resolution (Precedence to consideration of New Rules), <i>Mr. Gladstone</i> .	and Army. Division — For, 354. Against, 17.
25. Wed.—Business of the House. 1st Resolution. 7th Sitting.	Business of the House. 1st Resolution. 8th Sitting.
26. Thurs.—Egypt. Vote of Thanks to Navy	27. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 9th do.
	30. Mon.—Ditto. Ditto. 10th do.
	31. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 11th do.

## NOVEMBER.

1. Wed.—Business of the House. 1st Resolution. 12th Sitting.	Business of the House. 10th Resolution. 28th Sitting.
2. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. 13th do.	24. Fri.—Adjournment of House (Mr. Parnell's Release from Kilmainham). <i>Mr. R. Yorke</i> .
3. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 14th do.	Business of the House. 11th and 12th Resolutions. 29th Sitting.
6. Mon.—Ditto. Ditto. 15th do.	27. Mon.—Ditto. 13th Resolution and Standing Committees. Resolution 1. 30th Sitting.
7. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 16th do.	28. Tues.—Adjournment of House (Irish Land Commission). <i>Mr. Gibson</i> .
8. Wed.—Ditto. Ditto. 17th do.	Business of the House. Standing Committees. Resolution 1. 31st Sitting.
9. Thurs.—Ditto. Ditto. 18th do.	29. Wed.—Business of the House. Standing Committees. Resolution 1. 32nd Sitting.
10. Fri.—Ditto. Ditto. 19th do. Division on 1st Resolution—For, 304. Against, 280.	30. Thurs.—Adjournment of House (Land Act, Ireland). <i>Mr. Parnell</i> . Motion not Supported.
13. Mon.—Business of the House. 2nd Resolution. 20th Sitting.	Business of the House. Standing Committees. Resolutions 1 and 2. 33rd Sitting.
14. Tues.—Ditto. Ditto. 21st do.	
15. Wed.—Ditto. 3rd do. 22nd do.	
16. Thur.—Ditto. 4th and 5th do. 23rd do.	
17. Fri.—Ditto. 6th, 7th and 8th do. 24th do.	
20. Mon.—Ditto. 8th and 9th do. 25th do.	
21. Tues.—Ditto. 9th do. 26th do.	
22. Wed.—Ditto. 9th do. 27th do.	
23. Thurs.—Adjournment of House (State of Ireland). <i>Mr. Parnell</i> .	

## DECEMBER.

1. Fri.—Business of the House. Standing Committees. Resolutions 2, 3, 4, and 5. 34th Sitting.	2. Sat.—Prorogation.
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## SESSION 1883.

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### CHAPTER XXIII.

#### MR. FORSTER INDICTS MR. PARNELL.

Mr. Healy absent—Mr. Forster indicts Mr. Parnell—The Land Leaguers and the Chief Secretary—Mr. Serjeant Simon on the Wrongs of Jamaica—Talking out a Debate—Mr. Rathbone—Mr. Dillwyn—Lord Colin Campbell.

Feb. 15. — Mr. Forster indicts Mr. Parnell—Both Houses met to-day for the despatch of public business. In the Commons the Speaker read a communication from the Chief Justice of the Irish Court of Queen's Bench, informing him of the arrest of Mr. Healy. “I have thought it right,” the Chief Justice said, “to inform you of this circumstance in order to account for the probable absence of the hon. member,” a way of putting it which much amused the House.

Feb. 22. — Mr. Forster indicts Mr. Parnell. This is the sixth night of the debate on the Address, Ireland being the absorbing topic. Mr. Forster seized the opportunity to make a vigorous attack on Mr. Parnell.

Those who remembered the right hon. gentleman's attitude during the first three months of last year, would realise what it must have been to him to stand up in a crowded and sympathetic House and denounce Mr. Parnell. In those days, separated from Thursday night by scarcely twelve months, Mr. Forster was accustomed to sit on the Treasury bench in a condition of limp ruggedness. He had started on his Ministerial career in Ireland full of hope and courage. That he made the effort honestly and earnestly, sparing himself no pains, probably even Mr. Biggar would not deny. What came of it all the world knows. But it was given only to a few hundred men to see Mr. Forster sitting night after night on the Treasury bench, with head forlornly bowed beneath the storm of coarse contumely that beat upon him from the Irish quarter.

To-night came the long-waited-for hour of triumph. His enemies were delivered into his hand, and Mr. Forster evidently meant to crush them. In the days when he was restrained by official responsibilities, there was something pathetic in his patience under attack. That he felt the blows could be seen by a glance. But when he rose to speak he never met personality with retort, but set himself to answer the real or fancied grievance with painstaking minuteness. To-day all the suppressed indignation and anger of those days blazed forth. He almost literally danced around the prostrate bodies of his ancient foes, and with animated expression and gestures rained successive blows on Mr. Parnell, who sat opposite, trying, not altogether successfully, to seem at ease. Mr. Forster felt his turn had come at last, and he seized it with characteristic energy. Never before, as far as the records of Parliament testify, has one member stood up in his place and accused another of connivance at crime. This Mr. Forster bluntly did, with outstretched hand pointing to where Mr. Parnell sat, with a sickly smile on his pale face, and the House of Commons drove home the charge with a roar of acclamation.

As Mr. Parnell would probably make some statements, Mr. Forster was careful to furnish him with several detailed points which would be useful in framing his speech. There was, first, the question of the disposition of the Land League funds. Mr. O'Donnell had talked very bravely about these, but no one suspected him of knowing what the Land League was doing.

"I cannot imagine," Mr. Forster said, amid prolonged laughter, "any sane men, convened whether for good or for evil, taking the member for Dungarvan into their confidence."

It was different with Mr. Parnell, who was not only a member, but the chairman of the committee. He asked whether, when in Kilmainham or at liberty, did he know how the Land League funds were being disposed of? How far had he inquired into the conduct of those with whom he associated, and for whom he was in some measure responsible? Did he inquire about Brennan? Did he know about Sheridan? Or was he reckless about the conduct of his colleagues, and content to derive advantage from it? What did he think of *United Ireland*, which published a list of murders and outrages under the head-line, "Incidents of the Campaign"?

At this reference to a journal with which he is connected, Mr. O'Brien leaped up and shouted something across the House, inaudible amid the uproar his intervention excited. He was pulled back to his seat by friends near him, and though making several movements, remained moderately quiet. Mr. O'Kelly, who had been plainly simmering for the previous half-hour, now burst forth with irrepressible passion. Mr. Forster returned to his notes, and had got as far as the declaration that "Mr. Parnell either connived at murder and outrage in Ireland, or"—when the strident voice of Mr. O'Kelly was heard shouting across the floor, "It's a lie!"—cries of "Order!" came from all parts of the House, above which the voice of Mr. O'Kelly rose, shouting, "It's a lie! it's a lie!" Amid cries of "Name! name!" the Speaker rose, and, reminding Mr. O'Kelly of a warning given earlier in the course of the speech, solemnly named him. Lord Hartington moved that the offending member be suspended from the service of the House. Mr. Monk suggested that Mr. O'Kelly should be first desired to withdraw the offensive words, a suggestion met with a storm of disapproval. The question was put, and the House divided, 305 voting for the expulsion, and 20 against. Mr. O'Kelly, having the courage of his opinions, voted in the negative, and entering the House from the division lobby, passed straight out and disappeared.

Mr. O'Donnell, who had remained quiet under Mr. Forster's pungent references to himself, now rose on behalf of a stricken comrade, and wanted to know whether Mr. Forster's charge that a member of the House had connived at murder was admissible. The Speaker said it was too late to notice words that should, if necessary, have had attention called to them at the time. Mr. Forster, returning to his notes, carefully read out his indictment, which was to the effect that, whilst he did not charge Mr. Parnell with actually planning or perpetrating these outrages, he either connived at them, or that, warned by facts and statements, he determined to remain in ignorance of what was going on. Mr. O'Donnell again rose on the point of order, the Speaker answering that Mr. Forster had said nothing out of order, and the right hon. gentleman proceeded to the close of his speech, now near at hand.

At eight o'clock he resumed his seat, having spoken for nearly two hours. There were loud cries for Mr. Parnell, but

that gentleman made no response, and members hurried out to dinner. No one rising to continue the debate, the Speaker was about to put the question when imperative commands from the front Opposition bench were laid upon Colonel Tottenham to save the debate. Whilst that gallant gentleman was hastily putting his notes in order, the Speaker was proceeding to put the question, and the debate would have collapsed but that a more fluent personage came to the rescue in Mr. Reginald Yorke, who talked in an empty Chamber through the dinner hour, a condition of affairs which, as far as the audience was concerned, scarcely improved till towards eleven o'clock, when members came down in anticipation of the possibility of hearing Mr. Parnell. Mr. T. P. O'Connor was, however, put up in his place, and delivered a violent harangue, chiefly addressed with voice and hand towards Mr. Forster. For the fourth time in the debate the Speaker was about to put the question, when Lord Hartington interposed, and referring to Mr. Parnell's position, observed, amid loud and general cheering, that his silence seemed to admit that a *prima facie* case was made out in support of the charges, and that it would be expected that he would not only make a statement on the subject, but would place at the disposal of the House and the Government materials for forming their judgment. At the conclusion of Lord Hartington's speech, it being nearly one o'clock this morning, Mr. Parnell moved the adjournment, and the House shortly afterwards adjourned.

To-night the scene was changed, and with it the whole appearance of the House. On the previous night, worked up to a pitch of excitement by the energy of Mr. Forster and by their own convictions, members had been, perhaps, a little too demonstrative. It is a principle of English justice that before judgment is passed the accused shall be heard. There could be no doubt that Mr. Parnell was in an ugly corner. The instincts of the House, always, except in moments of rare passion, generous, were now moved in his favour. He was, of course, going to plead in palliation of his offence; and, if he did the thing properly, the House of Commons at least would not be hard upon him. In response to Lord Hartington's challenge last night, he would doubtless produce the accounts of the Land League, which would forthwith be placed in the hands

of an eminent City accountant. That was a matter full of pleasing interest, beyond the immediate question of who supplied the Invincibles with the sinews of murder. Many little mysteries of hotel accommodation, first-class railway travelling, and unaccustomed suits of clothing might be probed. Perhaps Mr. Parnell would produce these accounts on the spot. But, whatever he did, it behoved the House, above all things, to maintain a quiet and dignified attitude, so that it should not be said that a prisoner pleading at its Bar for something dearer than life had been overborne by unfriendly demonstration or evidence of prejudice.

At five o'clock Mr. Parnell rose, and was received with loud cheers from some of the Irish members, who made up for their lack of numbers by strength of lungs. The first sentences of the hon. member fairly indicated the line of his speech. With hands nervously working in his pockets, but with considerable command over his voice, he expressed his own conviction that nothing he could say would have any effect on the opinion of the House or upon public opinion throughout the country. But that was of the less consequence, as his utmost desire now, as always, was to make his position clear to the Irish people at home and abroad. This was rather a curious manner for a repentant sinner to open his defence. Still, the House would not quarrel with his way of addressing his defence, so that he established it. Two minutes later it was discovered that, instead of apologising, Mr. Parnell was accusing. Instead of going on his knees and imploring the clemency of the Court, he was snapping his fingers at the Judge, questioning the right of the jury to sit in the box, and pummelling the Public Prosecutor. He did not, he said, amid ironical cheers, intend to reply to the questions of Mr. Forster. He had no right to question him, standing as he did in a position very little better than that of an informer with regard to the actions of the men with whom he was associated, whilst he had not even the pretext of Carey that he was endeavouring to save his own life.

"The right hon. gentleman," he said, in scornful tones, "has called upon me to defend myself. I have nothing to defend myself against."

The late Chief Secretary had boasted that he had deposed him from an imaginary position he had assigned to him. "But, at

least," Mr. Parnell said, with bitter inflection of voice, "I have this consolation: I am in pretty good company. We both fell into the ditch, and I do not think that, in the process of pulling out the right hon. gentleman and myself, I have suffered so much in the opinion of my countrymen as he has suffered in the opinion of his." After a tirade, in which he invited the Government to "send Mr. Forster back to help Lord Spencer in the congenial work of the gallows in Ireland," Mr. Parnell, speaking with a fervour long absent from his Parliamentary utterances, said—

"For my part I am confident as to the future of Ireland. Although the horizon may at the moment appear clouded, I believe that the people will survive the present oppression as they have survived many worse ones. Although our progress may be slow it is sure. The time will come when the people of this House and of this country will admit once again that they have been mistaken, and that they have been led astray as to the right method of governing a noble, a generous, a brave, and an impulsive people."

Mr. Parnell resumed his seat amid loud cheers from his own party. Mr. Trevelyan and Captain O'Shea rose together. There were loud cries for the latter, and Mr. O'Shea, rising with an open book in his hand, read from the report of his speech in the House on the 16th May, in which he affirmed that he had mentioned Davitt to Mr. Forster among the persons whom Mr. Parnell was to press into the service of peace and order. Mr. Forster had then explained that he had not kept a note of the whole conversation. Mr. O'Shea now asked why he had not. "Did he," he asked "wish to hoodwink his colleagues?"—a suggestion which spread great joy among the Parnellites. Mr. Trevelyan doubted whether Mr. Forster had done well in giving the appearance of taking the Dublin revelations as the object of a general attack upon Mr. Parnell, but since he had done so, he thought that Mr. Parnell would have done well to make his position clearer than it was at present.

Mar. 8.—The  
Land Leaguers  
and the Chief  
Secretary.

All Chief Secretaries to the Lord Lieutenant go through certain stages in their relations with the Irish members. At first they are used as scorpions wherewith to lash their immediate predecessor. Compliments are paid them, with the object of bringing into

deeper shade the unutterable wickedness of the Minister they succeed. Next they are wheedled with fair words with intent to see how far they may be susceptible to such influence. This failing, as it necessarily must, comes the ultimate, inevitable, and far-reaching stage, during which the Chief Secretary is the object of vehement denunciation. The only difference in successive Chief Secretaries is the time these varied stages occupy. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach early reached the execration stage. Mr. James Lowther never quite suffered it, there being a disposition on the part of the Irish members to speak of him with contempt, which, to do Mr. Lowther justice, he heartily reciprocated. Mr. Forster, after very brief voyaging through smooth water, found himself amid storms unequalled in their rage, and even at this day his name excites more passion on the Land League benches than does that of the actual Chief Secretary, which is saying a great deal for the latter. Mr. Trevelyan had an unusually long spell of relief from this personal attack. He had, amongst other advantages, the melancholy one of profiting by the murder of his predecessor. That foul deed cast about the office of Chief Secretary a certain lurid halo for which even Land Leaguers must (at least openly) make some show of respect. Besides, Mr. Trevelyan is undoubtedly the best Chief Secretary of modern times.

Now the time has come when all pretensions of consideration and personal regard are thrown aside. It is a little hard for the older Irish members, who know Mr. Trevelyan intimately, and cannot fail to be influenced by a sense of his worth, to join in the bludgeon practice. Fortunately for the Land Leaguers, they have in Mr. O'Brien a fit instrument for their purpose. The editor of *United Ireland* is of that passionate, dog-headed, reckless type of which the Irish peasantry supplies many examples. The tone of high-bred courtesy which even in these days pervades the House of Commons, insensibly influences the lowest social class of Irish members. Mr. Healy has vastly improved since he entered the House. Mr. T. P. O'Connor has taken on a thin veneer of social courtesy, which is truly worse than his earlier manner; but it goes to prove the case asserted. Mr. Biggar, the latest to yield, practises a grotesque travesty of high Parliamentary manner which is irresistibly comic. Mr. O'Brien may be polished in time. At present he is an exceedingly rough

flint, and to-night hurled himself at the House generally, and more particularly at the head of the Chief Secretary.

The House of Commons is so accustomed to these outbreaks that it habitually hears them without concern. But in the near recollection of recent events, it was impossible to listen without a shudder to this man, standing with clenched hands, and hissing forth his words with closed teeth, holding up to the "execration of the Irish people" Lord F. Cavendish's successor in the Chief Secretaryship. Before Mr. Trevelyan, himself unusually moved, pointed the moral, those who heard Mr. O'Brien recalled the fate of others whom he, or the newspaper of which he is the responsible editor, had similarly held up to execration. Four names instantly recur to the mind: Mr. Forster, his life thrice attempted; Mr. Justice Lawson, his steps dogged by a would-be murderer, pistol in hand; Mr. Field, struck down in the public streets of Dublin, miraculously escaping death; and Mr. Burke, hacked to death in Phoenix Park.

Mar. 9. — Mr. Serjeant Simon on the wrongs of Jamaica.

There are depths in the nature of Mr. Serjeant Simon which have hitherto lain unsuspected. He has always been regarded with that respect that pertains to his high rank in the profession of the law. Where he practises, and in what circumstances he achieves his triumphs, are matters which may or may not be told right off with that ease and assurance that comes of daily familiarity. But certainly no one beholding him as he sits in his place in the House, or walks thither across the broad floor, would imagine that he was a serjeant-at-law. He looks more like a sober country gentleman with a turn for sport. He rarely speaks, and when occasion for speech has arisen, he has used it in an unemotional manner consonant with his appearance.

To-night the Serjeant came out in new form, and rather astonished the House. The subject which stirred the depths of his soul was the financial transactions connected with the detention of the ship *Florence* at Jamaica. A sum of between £7,000 and £8,000 had to be paid for damages owing to illegal detention, and the Imperial Government had undertaken to share half the burden with the Crown colony. Born in Jamaica, reared on its sugar plant, retaining pleasing memories of its blue sky and its black population, Mr. Serjeant Simon's soul was aflame

with the injustice of this proposition. What was the Mother-country for if not to pay the debts incurred by its Colonies? The proposal to pay half was paltry, and Mr. Serjeant Simon made up his mind to tell the House of Commons so.

But the mind of a serjeant-at-law moves in certain well-defined grooves, and at an equable pace. Whilst Mr. Serjeant Simon was thinking the matter over, and gradually working himself up into that state of virtuous indignation which eventually made him slightly incoherent, Mr. Gorst was acting. The Fourth Party usually fill in relation to British politics the part the *chiffonnier* occupies in the social economy of Paris. They rout about among the discarded and neglected odds and ends of home and foreign policy, and are sometimes rewarded by discovering a prize. Such a one Mr. Gorst had hooked up in this little transaction, which took place in one of the remotest and least familiar Colonies, trace of which was hidden in a few lines on the back page of the Estimates. At eight o'clock, in a House composed of nine members, including the Speaker, the member for Chatham had unfolded this terrible business. The circumstances were a little depressing, and but for the self-devotion of Lord Randolph Churchill, might have led to early collapse. But the noble lord, giving up to Jamaica the hour that was meant for dinner, sat by his colleague throughout his oration, cheered him with strident voice that echoed forlornly through the empty chamber, and laughed encouragingly when, with fine humour, so rich that it lost nothing by repetition, Mr. Gorst mouthed the phrase "My LORDS" in reading despatches written in the name of the Lords of the Treasury.

Gradually the House began to fill. Members had, indeed, been given to understand that the public service was in a critical state on account of delay in voting the estimates. There had been serious talk about Saturday sittings, and even of an extension of the sittings up to the threshold of Good Friday. So much fuss had been made that members had really come to think that the State was in danger, and had hastened from dinner in order to assist in saving it. It was not without surprise that they came back and found Mr. O'Donnell on his feet, discussing the affairs of Jamaica with that large knowledge which enables him at a moment's notice to state the facts connected

either with the administration of India, or the drainage of Dungaroon.

It was two hours earlier that Mr. Gorst, moving softly like a ghost through the deserted chamber, reached his seat, and suddenly opened up the case of Jamaica. When Mr. Serjeant Simon came in, Sir Richard Cross was on his feet, and matters were beginning to look serious.

“The Prime Minister laughs!” cried the late Home Secretary, pointing an indignant hand at the leader of the House.

“No!” said Mr. Gladstone, shaking his head.

“Then you smiled,” Sir Richard Cross sternly retorted, bringing his clenched hand down on the table. It was impossible to deny this, and the Premier nodded assent, amid triumphant cheers from the Opposition.

Mr. Serjeant Simon followed the late Home Secretary, and settled himself down comfortably for the speech he had intended to deliver under other circumstances. It had evidently been arranged in three divisions—Historical, Legal, and Philosophical.

“Two hundred and two years ago,” the Serjeant began, “Jamaica had a constitution bestowed upon her.”

The House grew manifestly restless. If the Serjeant had been content to say, “About two hundred years ago,” his speech would have had a better chance. But a man rising at eleven o’clock to join in a discussion on Jamaica already three hours old, who insists upon the odd two years in a couple of centuries, is evidently prepared to go into the matter thoroughly. Disturbed by the murmurs that rose up about him, the Serjeant prematurely reached the second stage of his address. But feeling instinctively that he had not exhausted the first, he went back to it, and once more the House heard how “two hundred and two years ago” a constitution was born unto Jamaica.

It was fine to see the Serjeant, with a large white pocket-handkerchief in his hand, turning upon restive members below the gangway, and, amid thunderous cheers from Mr. Warton, appealing to their Liberalism to permit him to trace the history of Jamaica through two hundred and two more or less eventful years. Presently the Speaker rose and informed the Serjeant that, having a motion on the paper with respect to the Government of Jamaica, he could not enter into the matter. The indignant flame which had played in the Serjeant’s eyes as he

glanced at the impatient throng below the gangway, melted as he turned to his learned brother in the chair. Even serjeants-at-law have to bear with the infirmity of the bench, and smile at their provoking and often pointless interruptions.

“ My lud—Sir, I was not aware—I think—I had intended to put a motion on the paper, but, really, I was not aware—”

All this the Serjeant murmured with deferential bows and wreathed smiles. The Speaker waved his copy of the Orders towards the bewildered Serjeant, and Mr. Dodds, ever ready to do a kind action, showed him his motion standing on the paper. “ I really did not know it,” said the Serjeant, mopping his brow, and gallantly struggling on, mixing up the Historic, Legal, and Philosophical, calling up the Speaker four times on the point of order, whilst ominous cries of “ Name! name! ” hurtled through the air. A serjeant-at-law to be “ named ” was a spectacle too terrible to contemplate. Cold dew stood on the Serjeant’s forehead, and was diligently mopped with the large white pocket-handkerchief, now grievously crumpled. Whichever way he turned the Speaker stopped him. There was, however, one point on which he was quite safe. He knew this, as he had tried it frequently. Drawing himself up for a great effort, glancing defiantly at members below the gangway, and deferentially towards his learned brother in the chair, the Serjeant began—

“ Two hundred and two years ago Jamaica had a const—”

The Speaker slowly rose. This was the fifth time, and he would inevitably be “ named.” Dropping very quickly into his seat, the Serjeant did not attempt to rise again; Mr. Gladstone interposed with his speech, and the Constitution of Jamaica remains a fragment upon which a trifle over two centuries look down.

Mar. 16.—Talk-  
ing out a de-  
bate.

It is a singular advantage on the side of a Liberal leader in the House of Commons that, when it is necessary to carry out any of those famous little tactics, not altogether free from taint of duplicity, he should have within his own ranks a wide choice of gentlemen who, from their eminent simplicity and guilelessness, are peculiarly fitted for instruments. When, as sometimes happens, it is necessary for the leaders of the Opposition to postpone

a division, they are accustomed to turn to Mr. Warton, who is always ready to say the necessary few words. But Mr. Warton has so often served the State in this capacity that his interposition has no further charm. It is a matter of course, and of habit. No particular emotion fills the human breast when we see a turncock turning on the water, or a fireman playing with the hose. Where the element of surprise and wonder would be introduced, would be to see a bishop making use of the turncock's appliances, or an archdeacon assisting at putting out a fire in the City Road.

**Mr. Rathbone.** Mr. Rathbone is neither a bishop nor an archdeacon, though he would have beamed gently in either walk of life. There was, nevertheless, something delightfully incongruous in beholding him put up this afternoon to talk out the debate on the Transvaal, and so avoid an inconvenient division. The principle on which this was worked is a very old one—as old, at least, as the time of Charlie Bates, who was accustomed to take advantage of Oliver Twist's innocent appearance and blameless life, when it was desirable to approach elderly gentlemen, who might have been suspicious of more pronounced address. Mr. Rathbone, engaged in the rough-and-tumble work of Parliamentary life, is endowed with many of those qualities, both of manner and appearance, which made little Oliver so useful to Charlie Bates and his companions.

**Mr. Dillwyn.** At one time Mr. Dillwyn might have been said to have run him pretty close. But Mr. Dillwyn's innocence of character is of quite a different type. Over his rugged simplicity there lurks suspicion of a shrewdness and, possibly, a hardness of character that might prove awkward if entirely left out of the reckoning. Standing together and before speaking, it is just possible that Mr. Dillwyn might be selected as the more perfect type of Parliamentary ingenuousness. He dresses the part better than Mr. Rathbone. But when they speak, the member for Carnarvonshire carries off the palm. There is a pleading earnestness in his manner, a breathlessness in his voice, a self-absorption in his subject, and an anxiety to convince, that irresistibly bring back to the mind

little Oliver Twist in the hands of the elderly gentleman whose pocket-handkerchief Charlie Bates had stolen. Mr. Dillwyn, on the contrary, whilst his sentiments are of the highest purity, has a dogged way of blurting them out, which, while demonstrating a perfect independence of character and noble scorn of the various lures that attract the ordinary members of Parliament, suggest other qualities not consonant with the idea that he might be used to cover a little party manœuvre.

Doubtless this circumstance has not escaped the attention of party managers, and Mr. Dillwyn is less useful now, because he has been used before. Such is, indeed, the fact. Mr. Dillwyn's character is a little tainted. The House calls to mind more than one occasion when he has unexpectedly risen from his familiar seat at the corner of the gangway, and justified some action of the Government, taken in apparent contradiction to the principles of which he has been the lifelong advocate.

Mr. Rathbone is quite fresh to the business, and his appearance this evening at twenty minutes to seven, with the obvious intention of carrying the debate over the sitting, was recognised as a master-stroke of tactics. The debate, which had raged since three o'clock, had been of a character rather curious than practical. Since, a few weeks ago, Mr. Forster fell upon Mr. Parnell and smote him and the Land League hip and thigh, the House has recognised in the member for Bradford a possibility of finding in times of need our Only Other General. Nothing could exceed the delight with which the Conservative Opposition listened to him as he breathed fire and sword against the pestilent Boer.

Sir M. Hicks-Beach, when he came to speak, refused to support Mr. Gorst's amendment on the specific ground that it "meant war." Still, if Mr. Forster would take on himself the responsibility of proclaiming war, there was no reason why the Conservatives should not cheer him; and they did, whilst Mr. Gladstone sat with pale, stern face, listening in growing anger to the remarks of his colleague.

He sprang up when Mr. Forster had made an end of delivering his message of peace, and it was plain to see from his quivering body, the pallor of his face, and the fire in his eyes, that somebody was going to catch it. Nor was the expectation belied. The debate by this time had got a little mixed.

Amendment had followed amendment as Amurath to Amurath succeeds. But the Prime Minister, with this wealth of subject, was content for the greater part of his speech to devote his attention to the speech of his right hon. friend, "the man of peace." He sat solitary on the corner seat, conveniently to the right, so that Mr. Gladstone could point to him with accusatory forefinger, as if he were the naughty boy of the school, placed in a prominent position, where the head master might indicate his various bad qualities to the assembled classes.

Lord Colin  
Campbell.

After the Premier's animated harangue the House beheld with some curiosity Lord Colin Campbell rise, with manuscript in his hand, and an evident intention to read something. It was, however, only the points, the impromptus, the epigrams which the noble lord had committed to manuscript. For the rest he trusted to the impulse of the occasion, as another, and even greater orator, Gambetta, was accustomed to do. But, as Lord Colin's speech was all point, it necessitated a frequent recourse to his manuscript, and somewhat detracted from the ease of his delivery. It was pleasing to find hereditary traits in this young scion of a ducal house. We shall some day, in the course of human nature, lose the Duke of Argyll, and must grope our way the best we can. But if we have Lord Colin Campbell we shall not be altogether without guidance. From the lofty pedestal of his travelled youth Lord Colin has looked down upon all governments, past, present, and to come, and, lo! they are very bad.

After his lordship had distinctly shown where the fault lay—that is to say everywhere, and participated in by every one—Lord Randolph Churchill appeared, singularly subdued and peculiarly free from self-assertiveness. So greatly was he influenced by the occasion that he declared in favour of the amendment finally proposed by Mr. Gladstone, though incidentally this attitude gave him the opportunity of snubbing Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

It was after Lord Randolph sat down, and whilst, had it been convenient to everybody, the House might have divided, that Mr. Rathbone presented himself from behind the Treasury bench with evident intention to talk the debate out. At first there was a pause, whilst members regarded the interruption

with a stare of incredulity. Then came a burst of laughter as the force of the comedy dawned upon them; and then, yielding to the fun of the situation, they hilariously and incessantly called for the division, Mr. Rathbone uplifting his voice in vain effort to direct the whirlwind and ride upon the storm. He did not quite do that. But he talked out the debate, and blushingly sat down as there stole over him a conviction that he had by this proceeding tarnished the white flower of a blameless Parliamentary life.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE AFFIRMATION BILL THROWN OUT.

Corner Men—Mr. Gladstone as a Convert—The Affirmation Bill thrown out—  
Mr. Biggar convalescent.

Apr. 13.—Corner men. The question of Corner Seats slumbers in the sunshine of Liberal prosperity. But it is likely to make its influence felt at the first appearance of a clouded sky. For several reasons it has little bearing upon the House of Lords. It is not altogether without significance that in that august assembly there is not that hankering after a corner seat which in the other House possesses a gentleman retired from the Ministry. When Lord Derby left the Government of Lord Beaconsfield he certainly made his explanatory speech from the corner seat on the front bench below the gangway. But that was a mere accident, and when Lord Carnarvon completed his last-but-one facing about, he did not present himself from a corner seat to address the Peers. The Duke of Argyll says kind things about his former colleagues from the middle of the bench immediately behind them; and there, too, sits Lord Sherbrooke, peering round the House in which he has never felt at home.

Lord Brabourne was, though for other reasons and in quite a different manner, similarly treated. The House of Commons' instinct being strong upon the new peer, he sought about for the corner seat. But finding the position had no significance in

this new sphere, he took up his quarters on the cross benches. This was a position which had a double convenience. It brought him under the very shadow of Royalty, and he might, as he sat there, touch the hem of the garment of a Prince of the blood. Politically, it was also a favourable position for some temperaments. It is, as far as party is concerned, held to be a No-man's Land. It is like one of the street refuges, where a man designing to cross from one side of the road to the other may rest till safe opportunity arrives. Here Lord Derby, having quitted the corner seat below the gangway, sat for some time on his way to the Liberal Ministerial bench. Lord Brabourne, after a brief sojourn on the Liberal benches, seized this position, which left him untrammelled in his ultimate choice of sides. He was at least in distinguished company, and in a good position for seizing on the first favourable opening on the right hand or the left.

In the House of Commons the corner seat is a serious political institution. It is the first thing a man thinks of when making up his mind to leave the Ministry, and possibly the consolidation of Mr. Gladstone's Administration, as at present constituted, may be prolonged by the fact that, unless Sir John Lubbock or Mr. Dillwyn can be induced to forego their long-established privilege, there are no more corner seats available. Of the three ex-Ministers of Liberal Cabinets who now fill the corner seats, only Mr. Forster's claim was disputed. Mr. Bright, in going back to the corner seat of the second bench below the gangway, was merely returning to his former heritage. Gentlemen below the gangway welcomed him as a prodigal returning to his earlier state, after a brief period of rioting in official delights. In another age they would have killed for him the fatted calf. But other times, other manners. Now they merely sacrificed Mr. Peter Rylands, generously proffering his advantageous position to the right hon. gentleman. Mr. Rylands was summarily evicted, but it is only fair to add that he was reinstated as caretaker, and in the frequent absences of Mr. Bright his cheerful countenance beams upon the House from the corner seat.

Mr. Goschen had not any more trouble in obtaining admission of his claim to the corner seat on the second bench behind Ministers. At prayer time no one presumes to place his

card in this seat, which is at once gracefully yielded upon Mr. Goschen's appearance. Mr. Forster's difficulty was with Dr. Lyons, and has been already described.

It is a significant fact that this custom of corner seats, inalienable on the Liberal benches, and just now specially notable by reason of the cluster of distinguished occupants, does not extend to the other side of the House. Mr. Gladstone's Administration, rushing comet-like through the political firmament, is peculiarly liable to fling off more or less blazing portions of its extremities. The Conservative Administration goes more gently, with less friction and breakage. But there is, here and there, an ex-Minister who might, if it were the fashion on this side of the House, claim a corner seat and assume the character of a candid friend inseparable from the local position. For reasons that can only be conjectured, Mr. Cavendish Bentinck does not avail himself of his privilege of taking a seat on the front Opposition bench. He was a Minister at the time the last Government went out, and by ordinary usage might claim his seat at the lower end of the front bench. But he prefers perfect freedom, and may be met with in any part of the House, rarely taking the same seat twice in succession. This is a personal preference which, whilst respected, cannot but be regretted. Few things would add more to the dignity and interest of Parliamentary procedure than to find Mr. Cavendish Bentinck permanently settled in the corner seat immediately corresponding with that held on the other side by Mr. Bright, and thence, from time to time, rising to counsel his party and the House.

Lord Henry Lennox might legitimately claim a corner seat. He does so far yield to the underlying principle that when he addresses the House he usually speaks from the corner by the cross bench before the chair of the Sergeant-at-Arms. But there is reason to suppose that this position is sought rather for the physical support afforded by the cross bench during oratorical effort than from any reason of political or party significance. Lord Henry's gentle and trustful disposition finds expression when addressing the House in the pose of his tall and graceful body. Like the ivy, he must cling to something, and as it cannot now be the brass-bound box before the front Opposition bench, the cross bench admirably serves the purpose.

On the Conservative side, the corner seats are identified

rather with persons than divisions of parties. Thus, Sir Walter Barttelot holds undisputed possession of the corner seat third behind the front Opposition bench, having in a similar position below the gangway Mr. Newdegate for companion. Mr. Healy held the corner seat of the bench below, a position now appropriated by Mr. Sexton, as being the next most lively personage of the party. Alderman Fowler has his corner seat, and Mr. Bentinck has long ceased to struggle with Lord Randolph Churchill for a place which he held whilst his lordship was “fighting bigger boys than himself” at Eton.

Apr. 27. — Mr. Gladstone has made up his mind to advocate a particular cause which he has spent some earlier years in energetically opposing he casts off all prejudice and predilections, going in for the new policy with a briskness and earnestness, and an air of self-conviction, that is positively contagious. When towards midnight he found an opportunity of interposing in the debate on Local Option, he was positively overflowing with enthusiasm for the new cause he had adopted—within the last two hours, as far as public admission went. He was in dinner dress, had moreover adorned himself with a white flower, and looked as gay and was as lively as if this were not midnight on Friday, and as if there did not lie behind the labour of an exhaustive week, including the delivery of a speech which, standing alone, would make the fame of a Parliamentary orator.

The difference between Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt at crises like the present was shown in the arrangement of the principal item in his speech. The Home Secretary had put off to the last moment the declaration that he would accept the resolution. Mr. Gladstone put it in the forefront of his remarks—“I have never yet voted for this motion,” he said; “but I intend to do so to-night;” whereupon a ringing cheer burst forth from the now crowded benches below the gangway, and a glow of conscious merit mantled the Premier’s face. Little Jack Horner, in the moment of the fruition of his honest labours, was not more pardonably convinced of his own goodness than was the Premier in not only abandoning a position long held, but in going over, bag and baggage, to the enemy. He was positively radiant with the joy of the moment, and

what a less consummate genius might have dealt with as an awkward passage in a political career he transformed into a triumphal march, with Sir Wilfrid Lawson going before playing the joyful pipe, whilst Mr. Caine crowned him with wreaths of roses and eglantine.

To the practical and unimaginative mind of Sir R. Cross all this was a little bewildering, and there was much that he "wanted to know." In the perturbation of the moment he maladroitly proposed to read a few extracts from reported speeches of the Prime Minister on the same question. The majority of the House had not regarded him with favour on his rising, strongly suspecting him of intent to say something to disparage the great statesman who had just given a fresh proof of his genius, and forged a new link in the affections and esteem of his party. But when Sir Richard innocently proposed to read a column or so out of *Hansard*, there arose a storm of indignation which made the leaves of the volume tremble in his fingers. At no time does the House care to have extracts read to it, a constitutional objection deepened in this case by the lateness of the hour and the knowledge that Sir R. Cross's elocutionary gifts are not among his chief recommendations. But far above this objection was a feeling something akin to horror that at this sublime moment, when the Premier had joined the triumphant ranks of Local Option, any one should be so mean as to recall what he had said when Sir W. Lawson seemed leading a forlorn hope.

The Premier lay back and smiled genially at Sir R. Cross, struggling with the House and his spectacles, which latter, in the excitement of the moment, were constantly disappearing and being found with great regularity at the back of his head. Sir Richard, cowed by the angry outburst, finally sat down. Everything was forgotten amid the genuine enthusiasm created in the Liberal mind by the fresh proof now furnished of the grandness of their leader.

May 4. — The  
Affirmation  
Bill thrown  
out.

When, at twenty minutes past one this morning, Lord Kensington was discovered forcing his way through the throng that stood at the Bar of the House of Commons, it was borne in upon the Ministerialists that all was lost, even Bradlaugh. Lord Ken-

sington had been telling the Ministerial forces, and, if he were finished first, experience suggested that he had the smaller number to tell.

As it was, the bearer of the news from the Ministerial lobby was in good time, and a buzz of excited conversation rose up as he appeared. This grew in volume as the whips from the other lobby delayed to put in an appearance. Before the House was cleared for the division the most sanguine Conservative had scarcely hoped for a majority against the Bill. It was believed the Government majority would be very small ; but still there would be a majority, the Bill would be read a second time, and fresh troubles for the Ministry would commence with the motion to go into Committee. Now it seemed clear that the majority had gone against the Government.

Perhaps it was not a hundred seconds that Mr. Milman was left standing with pensive countenance at the corner of the table, holding the paper in his hand on which was written the Government muster ; but it seemed half an hour. Members still streaming in from the "No" lobby, passing between the Front Opposition bench and the table, eagerly scanned the paper, and called out the numbers to questioning members on the crowded benches.

The last men were struggling through the wicket in the "No" lobby, and still the Clerk stood at the table, the fateful and yet incomplete record in his hand, and all around the crowded benches surging with excited men.

Mr. Gladstone sat on the Treasury bench, with both hands nervously grasping the blotting-pad, on which, from force of habit, he had placed a sheet of paper, intending to write his nightly budget to the Queen. He would have some news to write now, for as the tellers from the other lobby still tarried, it was clear which way the division would go. If it had been the Premier's first critical division, on which all his political prospects depended, he could not more plainly have shown the anxiety that possessed him. His colleagues near him seemed rather to like the prospect of being defeated—quite a joke for the strongest Ministry of modern times to fail to carry a Bill submitted after much deliberation, and which had occupied the attention of the House for a fortnight. They laughed and chatted as if the business at stake were somebody else's concern.

Only the Premier, with knees closely drawn together, hands nervously grasping the blotting-pad, with flushed face and anxious eyes, watched the excited crowd opposite, and seemed to be counting the numbers still slowly passing the narrow gangway between the table and the front Opposition bench.

At last—from first to last not a minute and a half by the impassive clock—Lord Richard Grosvenor came in and communicated to the Clerk at the table the figures from the “No” lobby. Before he reached the end of the table the Opposition knew how matters had gone. Still it was not safe yet to count on victory. The test of “the first teller in” is a pretty sure one, but allowances must be made for a relative rapidity of movement. On the Liberal side Sir Charles Dilke always makes the running in the division lobbies. Taking the session as a whole, in nine divisions out of ten Sir Charles is first through. Members in the rear may lag, but the van unconsciously takes its time from the right hon. baronet, and hurries forward. Apart from this accidental circumstance of individual influence, the constitutional habits of the Conservative party cause them to move more slowly over given distances. On an occasion like the present, when they united with the vitality of the Fourth Party the vigour of the Land Leaguers, some impetus would be given. But, as was shown by the result, the Liberal forces moved as a body more swiftly through the lobby than did the Conservatives. The interval of time between the conclusion of the respective tellings was sufficient to give the Conservatives a majority of between thirty and forty. The majority was actually only three, enough to throw out the Affirmation Bill, but not to account for the delay in the appearance of the tellers.

It was not safe to shout yet, but the murmur of six hundred voices speaking in low, eager whisper filled the House with suppressed sound, which, in another second, broke forth in a hurricane of cheers. As whip for the strongest Ministry of modern times, it is Lord Richard Grosvenor’s pleasing habit, when he has recorded at the table the figures in a division, to walk a pace straight down the House, face about, and wait for the paper to be handed to him. Now, the watchful, eager throng observed that, instead of taking a pace forward, Lord Richard, when he reached the corner of the table, turned half a

pace to the right, making room for some one else to take the paper from the Clerk. It was then the pent-up feelings which had compressed a month into a minute broke forth, rising to a still wilder height when the Clerk handed the paper to Mr. Winn in full token of the victory of the Opposition.

Mr. Callan, standing amid the throng at the Bar, insisted upon shaking hands with Lord Henry Lennox, who stood near him.

The four tellers retired four paces down the House, faced about, and stood in line waiting for opportunity to advance and proclaim the figures. What these might be, was a matter of overbearing interest. There was a majority for the Opposition beyond doubt; but was it big or little, five or fifty, two or twenty? Every one wanted to know this. But for the present it was enough to cheer, and this was done as it can be accomplished only by Conservatives and Irish members hallooing in unison. The throng to the left of the Speaker broke up into a confused mass, made up of outstretched arms, waving hats, flashing handkerchiefs, and open-mouthed, flushed faces. To sit down was impossible. To stand on the floor was inadequate. To leap on the benches was some relief, and it was almost universally sought. One member threw up his opera hat almost under the very nose of the Speaker. Whether he got it again then or thereafter is not known. But a hat more or less is of slight consequence in a moment of supreme victory.

All the while the four whips were standing in line waiting for a lull in the storm. At crises like this, not unexampled since Mr. Bradlaugh loomed above the political horizon, the face and bearing of Mr. Rowland Winn are inexpressibly pleasing. To his diligent whipping-up the triumph was in no small degree due. He had spent days and nights in working for this. Now it had come, unexpected in its fulness, and he might have been forgiven if some gleam of joy had passed over his face. But not a trace of emotion of any kind ruffled its stony aspect. With head slightly thrown back, paper held out before him, and eyes staring studiously into vacancy, he stood and waited till possibly some member would suggest to others that perhaps they had better desist from further cheering. What was the occasion for this tumultuous applause he did not seem to know. His business was to read out the figures on the paper,

and at the first lull in the uproar he advanced, bowing stiffly to the Speaker, and reciting the figures without the slightest trace of tremor in his voice.

“Ayes to the right, 289 ; Noes to the left, 292 !”

Again the cheering burst forth, and then there were cries of “Gladstone ! Gladstone !” But the Premier was writing his letter to the Queen, and neither heard nor saw anything beyond the limits of the blotting-pad on his knee.

May 25. — Mr. Biggar convalescent. — A generous public, always ready respectfully to sympathise with the struggle between private grief and public duty, will be glad to know that

Mr. Biggar has fully recovered those habits of activity and usefulness which formerly made him a prominent figure in Parliamentary life. For some time after an event which need not be particularised, his friends observed with alarm an inclination on his part to withdraw from participation in the business of the House. He considerably reduced the number of questions he was accustomed night after night to put to Ministers. An opportunity of calling attention to the case of Mr. John Clare on going into Committee on the Navy Estimates was wantonly disregarded. His cheerful cry of “Hear, hear !” grew noticeably infrequent. It became possible for him to see Mr. Forster pass down the House to take his seat, or even to rise and offer an observation, without crying aloud, “Oh, oh !” or “Yah !” More striking still were the long intervals of slumber in which he was wont to indulge. At ten o’clock, or thereabouts, he regularly went to sleep, waking about midnight either to move to report progress, or that the debate be now adjourned, according as the House was in Committee or in full session.

These ebullitions re-inspired hope in the breasts of his friends, as seeming to indicate that all he wanted was rest. If, after a couple of hours’ sleep, he temporarily resumed his old form, the inference was clear that with fuller measure of rest, and probably change of scene, Joseph would be himself again. In the meanwhile, and up to the very rising of the House, it was a regular feature in an evening’s sitting to discover Mr. Biggar peacefully slumbering below the gangway. Sometimes a smile broke over his placid features, reminding those who looked on

of the pretty legend which accounts for the infant's smile in slumber by saying—

“The angels are talking to him.”

With the resumption of business after the Whitsun recess, this pathetic lassitude which had crept over the member for Cavan disappeared. It was clear within the first few hours of the meeting that he had shaken off the glamour that enthralled him, and was again the debonair statesman and man of the world who knew how to combine the duties of London with the pleasures of Paris, who brought to political fence the skill of the perfect swordsman, and who, involuntarily as it seemed, lightened the dull and oftentimes harsh course of politics with the grace of culture and the sparkle of wit. One of the first evidences of this rehabilitation was the notice to call attention on Navy Estimates to the case of Mr. John Clare.

This involves a case somewhat familiar to the older members of Parliament. When Cavan first returned Mr. Biggar to the House it had been frequently detailed, and more than once voted upon. Possibly this was a circumstance that recommended it to Mr. Biggar. He took it up with natural enthusiasm, and in his first session went through all the details with charming freshness. As soon as the second session opened Mr. Biggar hastened to give notice of his intention, “on going into Committee of Supply on the Navy Estimates, to call attention to the case of Mr. John Clare, and move a resolution.” This he did with exemplary regularity through succeeding sessions. Sometimes he repeated his speech of 1874, sometimes he was content with leaving the motion on the paper, waiting for a night when it would be more than usually inconvenient for the House to be occupied with his story, and in such pursuit the session wore itself out. This year, up to the present week, the notice has been conspicuously absent, and the worst was argued.

It is well known in the pathology of cases of this kind that a very slight circumstance may have a wholesome effect, and will turn mind and body into the way of convalescence. It is probable that the adjutant on duty in Ireland who, as alleged, drew forage for an imaginary horse, has indirectly been the means of restoring Mr. Biggar to the House of Commons. The case may be as represented in the question on the paper, or

it may be imaginary, and it is pretty sure to be exaggerated. But upon a sensitive nature like that of the member for Cavan it has worked marvellous effects. Perhaps if the authorities at the War Office had answered it right off, the beneficial effects would not have resulted. But, desiring to make inquiry, the answer was deferred, and from that moment Mr. Biggar improved. The brightness began to return to his eye, the colour to his cheeks, and the lightness to his steps. He put the question again, and is still in pursuit of a full answer.

When the House resumed on Monday, the change in his appearance was noted, and the glad tidings were confirmed when the vote for the fresco in the new buildings at South Kensington was brought forward. This was a little after ten o'clock, the hour usually devoted to slumber. But Mr. Biggar was now wide awake, and was listening with evident approval to Mr. Cavendish Bentinck's disquisition on art, with especial reference to this fresco. Mr. Bentinck, always an effective speaker, is unusually impressive when speaking after dinner on art topics. Interesting and instructive as it is to read the Parliamentary report, his remarks are peculiarly agreeable to listen to, illustrated as they are by the picturesqueness of his own presence. When he waved his hat across the table at the shrinking figure of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, and insisted upon knowing "whether these frescoes were wet or dry," Mr. Biggar generously cheered him, and presently came to his assistance with a few remarks of his own on the subject of "freskers."

Yesterday he took a leading part in discussion on the military resources of the Empire, and incidentally spoke disrespectfully of the Austrian militia. He was back again to-night, full of hope and humour and courage, and when Dr. Lyons proposed to discuss the possibility of making Ireland richer and happier by afforesting waste lands, controlling mountain floods, developing fisheries, and extending lines of internal communication by water and land, he grimly counted him out. Those are not the means by which the Land League looks to benefit Ireland, and Mr. Biggar, revived in health and spirits, will have no disloyalty to the Land League.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### A CHALLENGE.—

A Duel averted—The Water Supply in the House of Commons—The Hat Trick—Sir E. Wilmot—Lord R. Churchill—Mr. Alderman Lawrence—Counted Out—“One of the Olden Time”—Mr. Knight—Sir Roger de Coverley—Defeat of the Deceased Wife’s Sister Bill—Cheers and Cheers.

June 1.—A duel averted. There is no doubt that, from a dramatic point of view, the O’Kelly episode suffered from the fact that Mr. McCoan’s statement and Mr. O’Kelly’s rejoinder were not made on the same day. There was, of course, the advantage of spreading the scene over two sittings, and the excitement of one day culminated in the interest of its successor. But for dramatic purposes it would have been well that Mr. McCoan, the manner of his address and his way of regarding things, should have had the advantage of the sharp contrast of Mr. O’Kelly’s. As frequently happens in episodes where Irish members take the leading part, the characters were admirably sustained. Of the two, Mr. McCoan’s was the finer study. The swashbuckler of the stage is common enough, and can be assumed at any time without need of special gifts. But there were some subtleties of characterisation in the part of Mr. McCoan that raised it to a very high level.

He rose from the front bench below the gangway, and the solemnity of his bearing at once arrested the attention of the House. Few knew what his sorrow was, but all could perceive that it was deeply seated. Without any attempt at oratorical effort, relying for effect simply upon the story he had to tell, Mr. McCoan went back to the epoch when, Mr. Forster having ventured to make a statement of fact to the House, the volcanic O’Kelly had burst in with a shout of “You lie!” repeated thrice, as in some old courts the crier makes proclamation “Oyez! oyez! oyez!” Mr. McCoan, thinking that was, perhaps, going a little too far, took in the subsequent division a characteristically judicious course. Approving Mr. O’Kelly’s procedure, he would have voted against his expulsion; dis-

approving it, he would have voted with the majority. He adopted a middle course, abstaining altogether from voting, and for this, which might certainly have been regarded as safe, he had been virulently attacked in Ireland. Even at the meeting of his constituents, which was the forerunner of the challenge to deadly combat, he had observed that judicial air which should have secured him the respect, if not the actual support, of both sides. He had declared that "many things had fallen from Mr. Forster with which he could not agree," and he added that when Mr. O'Kelly roared out, "You lie! you lie! you lie!" he "was obeying a generous impulse."

But the crowd were not to be won over by this diplomatic attitude, nor did it soothe the feelings of Mr. O'Kelly. The correspondence opened by that gentleman was conducted throughout with terseness and dignity. At first he would hold no direct communication with the offender. He telegraphed from Paris to Mr. O'Brien to demand a full apology. But here was displayed one of those little traits which make Mr. McCoan's impersonation of the character of the coy duellist inimitable. He would treat with none but principals, and thus Mr. O'Kelly was compelled to come to the front, and found himself engaged in an epistolary warfare, in which at least Mr. McCoan felt sure he would be vanquished. But Mr. O'Kelly has a way of going straight at a mark, which makes him a formidable adversary wherever met.

"Your letter of to-day," he wrote in reply to Mr. McCoan's able communication, "aggravates the offensiveness of your Tenahely speech. Mr. O'Brien is authorised to act for me, and I request that you will communicate with him, and refer him to some gentleman authorised to act for you."

If nature had, among other advantages, blessed Mr. McCoan with the smallest grain of humour, the House of Commons would have lost the enjoyment of last night's scene. Mr. Shiel, whose great uncle was once in custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms for having challenged Lord Althorp, very properly said that if Mr. McCoan went in bodily fear he should have gone to the nearest police court, and not have troubled the House of Commons. But to the practical mind of the member for Wicklow the matter loomed large and serious; of proportions to be fitted only with the magnitude of the House

of Commons. The House roared with laughter at passages in the correspondence, but no smile lightened the gloom of his countenance. Mr. O'Kelly had proposed to shoot at him. That he held was "a high Parliamentary offence," and as such he brought it under the notice of an assembly which greatly puzzled him by its levity. Mr. Gladstone, of course, had no discretion left him. The matter being taken seriously by a person chiefly concerned, and precedents being inexorable, he had to move that Mr. O'Kelly be ordered to be in his place to-day.

All this happened yesterday. To-day, the questions disposed of, the Speaker rose, and, addressing Mr. O'Kelly, who was in his usual place, stated that he had been ordered to attend in consequence of a complaint by Mr. McCoan that he had sent him a challenge arising out of causes connected with the proceedings of the House. Mr. McCoan having assured the House that he would not be a party to hostile measures, the House required a similar assurance from Mr. O'Kelly, and was ready to receive explanations and such submission to the pleasure of the House as the occasion demanded.

At this time the House was crowded in every part, and there was the usual attendance of strangers. The House of Lords being still sitting, there were only a few peers present. Mr. O'Kelly was of opinion that it was not necessary for him to enter into the merits of the case. He thought the House was travelling outside its proper jurisdiction in interfering in the matter, which was one purely personal, "and," he added, amid irreverent laughter, "touches my own dignity." He did not care much about the opinion of the House or about the opinion of the English people. What he did think a great deal of was the opinion of men of honour who live outside this country, and with many of whom he had during the better part of his life held intimate relations, a reminiscence at which there was renewed laughter. These anonymous personages would justify him in the position he had taken, and Mr. McCoan, having already placed himself out of risk, had no need to appeal to the House. Dismissing Mr. McCoan as no longer worthy the attention of any man, Mr. O'Kelly abruptly resumed his seat.

The House, which had been patiently listening for that submission which the Speaker had required, paused a moment, and there was some laughter. Mr. Gladstone said he had listened

with much regret to the remarks of the hon. member. The relations of Mr. O'Kelly and Mr. McCoan it was not any part of his business to consider. What it was his business to touch upon was the relations established between the House and the hon. member. The question whether Mr. O'Kelly cared little or cared much for the opinion of the House of Commons was not perhaps one upon which its character and dignity would in the main ultimately depend—a delicate way of putting it which caused a ripple of laughter. The House had always dealt strictly in cases of this kind, even at a time when the general sense of the country was not adverse to personal encounters. Now, when a change had come over [public opinion in that respect, the duty of interference of the House became one of greater stringency. He was loth to make the motion which, if matters stood as they did at the moment, it would certainly be his duty to submit.

Here the Premier paused in order to give Mr. O'Kelly an opportunity if he pleased to better his former statement. Mr. O'Kelly, rising, repeated with greater clearness the purport of his former speech—that after what had taken place on the part of Mr. McCoan, he considered the matter at an end. But here, as in his former speech, there was no tone of apology. Mr. Gladstone accepting this renewed assurance, refrained from making a motion, and after a few words from Sir Stafford Northcote the incident closed.

It was observed that Mr. O'Kelly was dressed with unusual care. Men of honour who live outside this country should not, even in so slight a matter as that of personal appearance, be discredited by one who “during the better part of his life had had very intimate relations with them.” This reference to a period of his career when his associates were of a higher class than those with whom fate now binds him, may perhaps, account for the coolness of Mr. O'Kelly's reception at the hands of his colleagues. Except by The O'Gorman Mahon, who hung over him as an old hen fondly hangs about a chicken born to her at an unexpectedly late period of life, the Irish members were icily cold. Perhaps they looked with jealous eye upon the popularity Mr. McCoan had gratuitously procured for his adversary in Ireland. Perhaps they laboured under a sense of uncertainty as to whose turn would come next. This matter was going off so well for Mr. O'Kelly that he might pursue it further, establishing a

kind of military dictatorship in their ranks, and permanently retaining Mr. O'Brien with a view to their individual subjugation. However it be, Mr. O'Kelly's elevated periods went uncheered, the only break in upon them being by the uncontrolled laughter of members who thought they might escape amid the crowd the penalty of a visit from Mr. O'Brien.

June 8. — The  
water supply  
in the House  
of Commons.

It is a curious, and to a student of human nature perhaps not an inexplicable, circumstance that a member of the House of Commons, feeling the necessity of refreshment in the course of a speech he contemplates making, always smuggles his glass of water into the House as if he had wrongfully acquired it, and would be subject to penal consequences if detected.

Perhaps, on the whole, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett is the most wholesale and the ablest practitioner. The very enormity of his need has forced the subject upon his attention. For an ordinary orator a single glass of water is a sufficient allowance for a speech. But it would go a very short way with the member for Eye. Given the necessity of refreshment during his speech, it follows that its amount must not be too narrowly limited. No one, least of all Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, can say where he may land when once he starts upon discussion of the foreign policy of Mr. Gladstone. He may, and often does, begin in Egypt, a convenient central point, from which he can survey mankind from Peru to China. The subject is so wide, the guilt of the Government so great, and his mastery of the facts so complete, that considerations of time in dealing with the matter are of the remotest consequence. There was once a divine who sorely tried the patience of his congregation by the length of his sermons. As he grew older they grew longer, till at last the deacons undertook to represent to him the inconvenience of the practice. It behoved them to do it delicately, for he was a good man, and had in his time been great. They called upon him, and represented that he had now laboured long in the vineyard, was not so strong as he had been, and that the congregation were prepared to sacrifice half an hour of the sermon. The old man was affected to tears, but was not to be outdone in generosity.

“ My friends,” he said, “ don't let this trouble you. When I am once started an extra half-hour is nothing to me.”

That is the case of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett. Whether his speech, having extended over an hour, shall be continued for a further half-hour is dependent entirely upon his stock of physical energy and his store of water.

The hat trick. When Sir Charles Dilke was Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett had rather a bad time of it. Sir Charles had a habit of interposing and remorselessly tripping him up with a straw of fact, or closing large tracts of country to him by insurmountable assertions. But speeches prepared on these subjects are not to be wasted. There are the notes for them, and even if a page or two be misplaced, it is of no consequence. The argument loses none of its cogency, nor is assertion robbed of any of its downrightness. Fragments of undelivered speeches on foreign affairs strung together, may to the literal-minded seem a little lacking in coherency. But they have the compensation of picturesqueness, and the recommendation that a man can go on talking about them as long as his voice and the patience of the audience hold out.

It will be clear that, in these circumstances, an indefinite supply of water is a necessity of Mr. Ashmead Bartlett's Parliamentary existence. Openly to bring in one tumbler as a preliminary to rising would be to call down upon him the ridicule of small-minded persons opposite. But he must have the water, so he brings it in his hat. Long practice, a steady hand, and a firm footstep, have enabled him so to balance a glass of water in the inside of his hat that he can walk up the floor of the House hat in hand, no one suspecting the presence of anything else. But, as one tumbler is not sufficient, especially if he is likely to open the Central Asian question, he makes a second and sometimes a third journey, secreting the glasses of water under the bench, and till he catches the Speaker's eye, sitting there in an agony of apprehension lest some member passing by shall inadvertently betray his secret by kicking over a tumbler.

Sir E. Wilmot. Sir Eardley Wilmot lacks the finesse of the member for Eye, whilst sharing the common disinclination publicly to supply himself with refreshment. To-

night he arrived before the Speaker took the Chair on the resumption of the sitting, and having surveyed the House, and finding only half a dozen members present, he determined to face the matter out, and presently reappeared bearing a tumbler of water, which he defiantly carried up the floor of the House, and deposited under the bench. If the House had been moderately full, he would have been hilariously cheered. The House of Commons always cheers when there has been a big division, or when a glass of water is brought in.

**Lord R. Churchill.** One night, not very long ago, Lord Randolph Churchill happened to be on his feet addressing the Chair. Feeling thirsty, he turned to one of his faithful party, and asked for a drink. Resuming his remarks, it occurred to the noble lord that he had not entered into details, and again interrupting his speech, but without lowering his voice from debating pitch, he said, "BRANDY AND SELTZER." When Mr. Gorst came back with a large tumbler there was even louder cheering than would have greeted the event in the ordinary way. There was a frankness and an absence of circumlocution in the request of Lord Randolph Churchill which, among other things, endears him to the House of Commons. There have been more or less well-founded suspicions on the subject in times past. But this was the first time it was directly and unmistakably brought under the notice of the House, that there was other sustentation for oratorical effort than plain water.

**Mr. Alderman Lawrence.** How Alderman Lawrence managed to get his tumbler in remains a mystery, the darker because it was a very large one. There are circumstances which make it especially difficult for the Alderman to conceal a soda water tumbler about his person without having attention called to it. Colonel King-Harman, Mr. Montague Guest, Mr. Whitbread, or Mr. Cotes might do it. But the Alderman would not be well advised to make the attempt. It was the more remarkable because his appearance upon the Parliamentary scene was unexpected to himself, and there had been no opportunity for those secret preparations which preface speech on ordinary occasions. His motion, which related to the Inhabited House Duty, stood second on the list. It was not likely to be reached till a late hour, and

there was even a probability that the House would be counted out at nine o'clock. The Alderman was dining in civic company when news was brought by a breathless messenger that his motion might be "on" at any moment. It was an incident something akin to the sound of the artillery at Quatre Bras breaking in upon the festivities of the Duchess's ball at Brussels. The Alderman was instantly awake to the call of duty. He rushed down to the House just in time to go into action.

The House was not crowded, but never, as far as the Alderman's memory goes, had he been so successful. Usually the Irish members interrupt him with noisy cries and untimely laughter. Now, massed below the gangway, awaiting an opportunity to further the course of public business, they were irresistibly drawn by his arguments and eloquence. The more they cheered the more energetic grew the Alderman, and the more thirsty. The first appearance of the soda-water tumbler from under the bench was the signal for ringing cheers, which he modestly appropriated rather for the strength of his case than for his own skill in putting it. From time to time the soda-water tumbler appeared on the scene, drawn up from below, something after the fashion that a trained bullfinch hauls up his little bucket; and when, at length, the Alderman resumed his seat, amid a final burst of cheering from the warm-hearted Irishmen, he felt that it is easy enough to speak in the House of Commons when the audience is not only attentive, but appreciative.

June 15.—Counted out. There have been times when the House of Commons has been counted out on resuming at nine o'clock, after a morning sitting. That was a circumstance that could not have been absent from Mr. Moore's mind when he reached the House to-night, though it had no particular bearing upon his case. Only a short time ago Dr. Lyons, full of enthusiasm and information, had obtained a similarly favourable opportunity of unfolding his scheme for the regeneration of Ireland. He had devoted much time to it, had travelled about solitary districts of the country, with his pockets full of acorns, to be planted wherever opportunity offered. The time had at last come when he could take the House of Commons into confidence and counsel. But before he could plant a cabbage, much less an oak, he was counted out. That was sad for him; but he was not Mr. Arthur

Moore, he had never been a High Sheriff, and he had not had the tact to possess himself of so fascinating a subject as that of Workhouse Schools in Ireland.

Things certainly looked very bad when a few minutes after nine Mr. Moore rose to deliver his oration. Still, members would come in. They must have seen Mr. Arthur Moore was about to call attention to the state of workhouse schools, and no base attractions of the dinner-table would keep them away from the intellectual treat. He therefore commenced with a light heart. He would speak slowly and save the more striking passages till later, so that they might do the greatest good to the greatest number. "The only wonder is," he said, "that the state of things I am about to describe should have lasted so long." He was evidently going into the matter *ab ovo*, as Mr. Hicks would say. His notes were plainly voluminous, and a blue book or two tastefully displayed on the bench beside him promised recreation from that quarter.

One curious feature in Mr. Moore's Parliamentary oratory is his sudden yielding to temptation to shout. Mr. Synan does not speak in a whisper. To tell the truth, he has apparently studied speech in the school of Old Bill Barley, whose remarks as he lay on his back in bed in an upper chamber disturbed the meditations of Herbert Pocket as he approached the house to pay his devoirs to Miss Barley. But there is a method in Mr. Synan's shouting. After the first few sentences of his speech he yields himself up entirely to the joy of the supposition that the Speaker is stone deaf, and must be addressed at the top of the human voice. Mr. Arthur Moore's shouting is like peals of thunder breaking through a summer sky. There are, as it were, trains of gunpowder promiscuously scattered over the paths of his speech. He goes along quietly and unsuspecting till the fire of his eloquence acting upon the train of gunpowder, there is an explosion, and to every one's astonishment Mr. Moore is discovered very red in the face scolding the Speaker as if the right honourable gentleman had personally offended him.

He had gone off in one of these paroxysms when he observed on the bench opposite a gentleman of venerable appearance, who was also on his legs addressing the Speaker. This was very shocking, contrary to rule, and not to be submitted to. If the honourable and elderly member wished to

express his perfect agreement with Mr. Moore's remarks, he should wait till they had been brought to a conclusion. Such interruption was intolerable, and Mr. Moore, withdrawing his angry countenance from the Speaker, turned full upon the intruder, and proceeded at the top of his voice to declare that "the working of the Poor Laws in Ireland is left to a body out of harmony with the sympathies of the people, and in its policy narrow and dogged."

This righteous indignation had its due effect. The elderly member resumed his seat as hastily as he had risen. Mr. Moore did not catch the remark he had seemed to offer to the Speaker. But that was of little consequence, and he was proceeding in denunciatory strain when interruption came from a fresh quarter. It was the Speaker who was now on his legs with warning cry of "Order, order!" This was too much. Mr. Moore almost made up his mind that he would not go on with his speech. It would be a just punishment for the House if he either did not deliver it, or cut it short by, say, half an hour. The Speaker, three-cornered hat in hand, was slowly pointing all round the House as if he saw ghosts in it, and was counting them. When he had finished he said, "The House will now adjourn," gathered up his robes, walked out of the Chair, and disappeared by the side door. The few members present hastily made for the door, a course earlier adopted, with unexpected display of agility, by the white-haired gentleman whose interruption had first excited Mr. Moore's ire.

Mr. Moore, with his manuscript in his hand and his blue books by his side, looked with astonishment at the moving scene. The Speaker had just come in after two hours' rest. What did he mean by now going off to his tea? Why should the Sergeant-at-Arms leave his chair? Why should members bustle out? And, above all, why should the clerks at the table fold up their papers and lock up their boxes? This could mean only one thing, but belief in it was hard to grasp. It could not be; and yet it was. Mr. Arthur Moore, late High Sheriff of Tipperary, had been counted out whilst on the threshold of a speech in which he proposed to enlighten the House of Commons on the subject of workhouses in Ireland! After this let deluge come and the heavens fall. The shamed earth would only too gladly accept oblivion.

June 22.—"One  
of the Olden  
Time."

It seems almost a pity that the Speaker should have recalled Mr. Knight to the subject of the amendment before the House when he was addressing it towards midnight. It is true he had strayed a little wide of the mark. The subject under discussion was the operation of the Poor Laws in Ireland, on which Colonel Colthurst had moved a resolution demanding their assimilation with the English practice. With this, it is evident, the connection of a detailed account of what happened at Bromsgrove in the time of Mr. Knight's father was a trifle remote. Mr. Knight's father is an historic personage, removed only by a hundred years or so from that still more noteworthy member of the Knight family who, "in the time of the Commonwealth, was a considerable ironmaster at Madely, in Shropshire." It is, by the way, remarkable how time sanctifies occupations. The other day, when Mr. Caine happened to offend the sensibilities of Mr. Callan, that gentleman, feeling about in bemused manner for an epithet sufficiently opprobrious to meet the occasion, called him "a Liverpool ironmaster," and was promptly and sternly called to order by the Speaker. Yet Mr. Knight, desirous of attesting the long-established respectability of his family, proclaims in the pages of *Dod*, and elsewhere, that he "is descended from Richard Knight, of Madely, in Shropshire, a considerable ironmaster in the time of the Commonwealth." In years to come, perhaps under another Commonwealth, some descendant of the member for Scarborough may proudly claim affinity with "a considerable ironmaster at Liverpool, Lancashire, in the reign of Queen Victoria."

Mr. Knight. It is forty-three years this session since Mr. Knight entered the House of Commons. He came in with the Conservative reaction that upset the Melbourne Ministry, and triumphantly brought in Sir Robert Peel to abolish the Corn Laws. Mr. Gladstone sat on the same side as Mr. Knight in those days, and the member for Worcestershire heard the young Minister answer questions and make speeches as Vice-President of the Board of Trade. Forty-two years and the breadth of the House of Commons now separate the two members from that epoch. To-night, as Mr. Knight waved his gold-rimmed eye-glasses in emphasis of the description of

affairs at Bromsgrove in the time of his father, "when poor rates were twenty shillings in the pound," Mr. Gladstone sat stretched out on the bench opposite, looking fagged and weary, with forty years of hard work behind him, and the necessity of forthwith getting the Corrupt Practices Bill through Committee, in order to take up the Agricultural Holdings Bill.

It was before a scanty audience that Mr. Knight broke a long silence. He is a gentleman of old-fashioned notions in more respects than anent the Poor Law. When he entered Parliament it was not the custom for members to make perpetual speeches, whether they had anything to say or not. They were there chiefly to vote, and get home to bed in tolerably decent time. But this question of the Poor Laws was one that had peculiar attractions for him. Forty-two years ago, when he took his seat in the House of Commons, the Poor Laws importunately pressed themselves upon the attention of the public. At the opening of the Session which proved the last of Lord Melbourne's Administrations, a measure for amending the laws relating to the poor had a prominent place in the Queen's Speech. The Corn Laws still existed, and the poor were at every man's gate. In the town of Paisley alone it was reported that there were not less than 14,000 people who did not know from morning to night where to get their daily bread.

The poor—or at least the Poor Law—Mr. Knight had always had with him; and now, when debate was raised on the subject, he could not fail to be in his place to take part in it. He had brought with him a gilt-edged volume, which turned out to be a report by Mr. C. P. Villiers on the question of the administration of the Poor Laws. There have undoubtedly been one or two since, but this was recent enough for Mr. Knight, and he sat through the earlier speeches studying the volume, occasionally looking up to regard the Speaker over his gold-rimmed glasses. When his opportunity came he tucked Mr. Villiers's report under his left arm, and with explanatory movement of the eye-glasses, told hon. members about Bromsgrove in his father's time, and of much else that filled the House with a faint, musty smell, as of dried apples brought down from the store-room.

As the general drift of his remarks were hostile to the present administration of the Poor Laws in Ireland, the gentle-

men below the gangway on his left hand cheered him, and to them accordingly he courteously turned, and pointedly addressed his reminiscences of the good old times when the poor rates were twenty shillings in the pound, "and," as he said, "you couldn't get beyond that, you know." The flow of Irish enthusiasm was momentarily checked by Mr. Knight's deprecatory reference to the Irish farmers.

"They are not what *we* call farmers, you know," he said, with a confidential gesture towards Mr. O'Sullivan. "They are poor men with large potato gardens."

Also his lofty references to "a gentleman and his tenants" were not quite to the taste of the party understood to have a prejudice against landlords. But Mr. Knight's high-bred courtesy overcame all, and when he recommended Irish members to read "Sybil, which," he added, "was nothing but a collection of political lectures," Mr. Biggar, waking up, generously cheered him with a shrill "Hear, hear!"

Sir Roger de Coverley. It was after this that Mr. Knight, warming with the subject, stopped at Bromsgrove in the time of his father, and proposed, apropos of Colonel Colthurst's amendment, to describe a few incidents relating to family life there. It was then the Speaker, doubtless with pain to himself, being one of the most courtly gentlemen in the House, was compelled to interpose, and Mr. Knight, abruptly resuming his seat, showed no sign of rising again. The House of Commons is always, or nearly always, instinct with gentlemanly feeling. As the veteran member sat silent and abashed beneath the Speaker's reproof it warmly cheered him on to fresh endeavour. But, when he came to think of it, he really had nothing more to say; and why should he continue? But to sit silent might be construed as evidence of pettishness. So he rose and, with gracious ceremony, bowed to the House and to the Speaker, and once more relapsed into his habitude of silence.

July 6. — Defeat  
of the De-  
ceased Wife's  
Sister Bill.

What made a speech from the Duke of Marlborough a necessity to-night was the duty of explaining how he should come seriously to move the rejection of a Bill on the third reading, when it had had such a fortnight's history as the Deceased Wife's

Sister Bill. The Duke, happily or unhappily, was scarcely equal to the occasion. He has neither the fluency, the audacity, nor the skill of his younger son. The Duke of Abercorn, who admits that the ability of his family will be chiefly sustained by the generation that succeeds him, is accustomed on great occasions to rise to necessary heights by accepting the assistance of his gifted sons, who prepare his speeches for him. This, at least, was the case up to a recent date, though possibly an incident that happened in debate on the last Irish Land Bill may have resulted in fresh arrangements. On that occasion the Duke, reading the manuscript prepared for him by his sons, came upon a sentence to the following effect :

“ I am, my lords, now reaching a period of life at which the material interests of this world, its pleasures and its gains, are of diminishing importance.”

The Duke, not being a very ready man, was obliged to read this sentence, lest the break might appear too abrupt. But it is understood that he did not at all like it, especially viewing the quarter from which the sentiment came.

Perhaps the Duke of Marlborough, warned by this instance of filial heartlessness, would not trust Lord Randolph Churchill to prepare his speeches for him. A young man to whom nothing is sacred would probably find peculiar pleasure in “ letting-in ” his own father. Deprived of this natural source of assistance, the Duke of Marlborough fell back upon his own resources, with most comical effect. Beating about for a reason why he should move the rejection of the Bill on its third reading, he found it in nothing less than Mr. Chamberlain’s speech at Birmingham ! The House of Lords, more polite and less mobile than the House of Commons, listened with evident amazement, but without interruption, to the Duke, as he maundered around the topics of Mr. Chamberlain’s speech. But when, with an obtuseness scarcely to be expected even from a Duke, he asked, “ And how do these things bear upon the Deceased Wife’s Sister’s Bill ! ” he supplied an irresistible opportunity, and there was much ironical cheering and laughter.

The House listened with some impatience to the prolongation of the debate. The Bishop of Exeter, it is shocking to relate, was even greeted with loud cries for the division when he rose to preach his little sermon on the familiar text. Lord Selborne,

in rising, pointedly nominated himself as the last speaker who stood in the way of the division. The conviction that the Bill was lost, following sharply upon the certainty of carrying it, had grown as the debate proceeded. Whilst the division was in progress there were hot alternations of hope and despair. But no one in the House was greatly surprised when the Duke of Marlborough handed the paper to the Lord Chancellor, who, in a voice struggling with emotion, proclaimed that the Bill had been thrown out on the third reading by a majority of five.

July 9.—Cheers and cheers. Mr. Newdegate's cheer does not partake of the ordinary character of this Parliamentary institution. There are cheers of various kinds. There is Mr. Alderman Fowler's deep-chested “*Yah, yah, YAH!*” most familiar when Mr. Onslow, or Mr. Warton, or Mr. Ashmead Bartlett proposes to take part in debate, and hon. gentlemen opposite indicate by profound sighs or other more or less articulate signs that on the whole they would spare them the trouble. Then the alderman comes in with full-throated indignant cheer toning down to approval and encouragement as he withdraws his glance from members opposite, and turns it upon his friend. There is Mr. Gladstone's cheer, as significant in varied ways as an ordinary man's speech. There is Lord Randolph Churchill's cheer, of quite unexpected force when one regards the slight figure and youthful mien of the noble lord. There is Mr. Mundella's cheer, not so much heard now as in former days, when he sat below the gangway; but still breaking forth from time to time, and always followed by a demonstration from the Conservatives, who know it of old, and reflect what it must cost him now habitually to restrain it. Apart from a thunderstorm, nothing could be conceived grander in its way than a cheering match between Alderman Fowler and the Vice-President of the Council. There is Colonel Alexander's cheer, which, if heard at Inckermann, as it probably was, goes some way to account for the sudden turn in the fortunes of the day. There is Mr. Biggar's cheer, shrill in tone and plainly ironical in meaning. There is Mr. Healy's, as unexpectedly stentorian as Lord R. Churchill's. One can understand Mr. Mundella and Alderman Fowler producing startling effects of this kind, but Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Healy occasionally surprise new members. There is

Sir George Balfour's cheer, a plaintive cry as of a man weary of a world where large experience and natural gifts are more than neglected, even positively resented when generously proffered. There is Mr. Warton's "Hear, hear!" the point of which is made when it rudely interrupts a speaker; the greater his eminence the more successful the effort. There is Mr. Ashmead Bartlett's cheer, with which he says things otherwise unutterable when Sir Charles Dilke, or, in later months, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, is making statements with respect to foreign policy.

All these interpositions in debate are familiar parts of Parliamentary procedure. Each is as intimately known as the face of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and the precise meaning intended to be conveyed by each is as readily caught as if expressed in articulate language. But, for originality, for the something that never was on sea or land, Mr. Newdegate's "Hear, hear!" interjected in the course of debate, stands by itself. The cry of the waterfowl heard at night by the margin of the lonely river sometimes recalls it. A crow of serious views, solitarily seated in contemplation amid the topmost boughs of an oak in a quiet park on a Sunday morning, occasionally approaches it. It is not only that the cry is solemn. It has in it something of reproof, much of warning, and infinite depths of lamentation. Mr. Leatham's proposition in the course of to-night's debate on Women Suffrage that "marriage is the normal state of woman" was scarcely, or at least not necessarily, calculated to create melancholy. Most women like marriage, and some men. But to hear Mr. Newdegate break in with this weird cry of "Hear, hear!" was suddenly to invest wedlock with terrors none the less blood-curdling because they were vague and shadowy. Mr. Newdegate, with his red handkerchief sadly but firmly clasped in his right hand, his head bent, his figure drooping, and an aspect of intensest melancholy on his face, evidently saw things remote from ordinary\*ken.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### NEARING THE END.

The Corrupt Practices Bill—Sir Hardinge Giffard—Sir R. Cross—Lord Elcho in New Quarters—Lord R. Churchill—Lord Sherbrooke—Lord Rosebery—Lord Dunraven—A Drowsy Night—Mr. Salt—Mr. Mundella—The Premier—Mr. McCullagh-Torrens—The Privilege of Royalty—Imposing upon Mr. Gladstone—Hard Work—Nearing the End—Lord Mayor Dawson—Prorogation.

July 13.—The Corrupt Practices Bill, which four weeks ago came in like a lion, went out at an early

hour this morning like a lamb. Its life has been stormy, but its end truly was peace. Few Bills that have in recent Sessions come before the House of Commons have more acutely exercised members. Ordinarily, in considering Bills submitted to them, they have in view the prospects and interests of the nation. These have, of course, not been absent from the mind in deliberation on the Corrupt Practices Bill, but, in addition, their own personal interest has been brought home to them. All clauses and all amendments have been criticised from the point of view of the candidate, and past experience has been habitually brought to bear to enlighten future constituencies. Mr. Biggar, who early in the career of the committee took a prominent and intelligent part in its discussions, was notable for the striking way in which he was able to bring home possibilities to the minds of those who had been Parliamentary candidates, and who might again occupy that position."

"You might," he said, with his judicial air, "give a necklace to a lady during a Parliamentary contest. Would that come within the maximum of personal expenditure?"

The House felt that this was a question Mr. Biggar had right to put. His generous habits where ladies are concerned are a matter of public notoriety, and he succeeded, by his brief interjectionary interrogation, in throwing a strong light upon the difficulties that may environ a Parliamentary candidate under the new Act.

Sir Hardinge Giffard. It has been notable that in respect of a Bill conducted from the Treasury bench by the law officers of the Crown, the gentleman who shared that position in the former Government has entirely abstained from participation in debate. But Sir Hardinge Giffard never has taken to the House of Commons. It was not without omen that when he presented himself to take his seat he could not find the papers necessary for his admission, and stood at the table for a bad five minutes searching for it through the largest accumulation of letters and documents ever produced out of the same number of pockets. It is a nice inquiry why gentlemen who gain reputation and fortune by gifts of speech publicly exercised elsewhere, should almost invariably fail in catching the ear of the House of Commons. Yet such is the indisputable fact. It would be difficult to name more than one member of the present House, who, being also a barrister, is a success as a Parliamentary debater. The exception is Sir Farrar Herschell, who manages to combine the acuteness, lucidity, and argumentative power which make a man's fortune at the Bar, with that indescribable something that makes speech acceptable in the House of Commons. Sir William Harcourt is a House of Commons speaker. But then few authorities, beyond a former contributor to the correspondence columns of *The Times*, would assert that Sir William Harcourt is a lawyer. Sir Henry James never permits the House of Commons to forget that he has been trained at the Bar. Mr. Edward Clarke is much more successful. But the general principle remains, and Sir Hardinge Giffard, recognising its supremacy, has practically retired from participation in Parliamentary debate.

Sir R. Cross. In these circumstances it is well for the House and the country at large that Sir Richard Cross has been able to devote his valuable time and his commanding abilities to improvement of the Corrupt Practices Bill. Sir R. Cross combines with the political acumen and statesmanlike breadth of mind of the average country gentleman the trained legal faculties of the Chairman of Quarter Sessions. He is, in truth, a barrister, but does not bring the subtle mannerisms of the Bar into discussion in the Forum. If a remark may be ventured to the disparagement of the superior qualities of

the right hon. gentleman, it may be hinted that he is a little lacking in the sense of humour. It is said that when there was brought under his notice the record in a recently published book of a remark by the late Lord Beaconsfield, he instantly assumed the severest Chairman-of-Quarter-Sessions air, and painstakingly proceeded to demonstrate the impossibility of such a remark having been made.

“How could he forget to call me Sir Richard?” he said. “Why, it was upon his recommendation that I was made Grand Cross, and so recently too. It is quite absurd to suppose he could have forgotten.”

That story may be apocryphal. But Sir Richard’s famous declaration, “I hear an hon. member smile,” and his angry bewilderment at the laughter that followed, are simple matters of fact. So is his difficulty with the House last night. The question under discussion was what a voter might or might not do if permitted to use a voting paper.

“Now,” said the ex-Home Secretary in his self-satisfied, sparrow-chirping way, “I am John Jones. I, John Jones, send——.”

What it was that John Jones was to send is lost to history in the roar of laughter which followed upon the right hon. gentleman’s pleased assumption of this not unfamiliar cognomen, the genial condescension with which he placed himself in the position of John Jones, and the business-like way in which he proceeded to show what an exceedingly irreproachable John Jones he would make. Why the Committee should laugh was evidently hopelessly beyond his comprehension. They were there to carry on business. He was there, at whatever expenditure of priceless time, to assist them. He was not going to estimate the value of such assistance. But there it was proffered, and, if he were to “hear smiles,” or “observe any hon. gentleman laugh,” he would at once withdraw from frivolous company; and he did.

But he was back again to-night, looking wiser than ever, settling point after point as points arose, patronising the Attorney-General, scolding the Committee, perpetually losing his spectacles, which strayed to the top of his head, and after nervous search bringing them down in order to scan the group opposite, and detect the first symptom of a smile. This was his last opportunity, and he made the most of it, once causing the blood

of the Attorney-General to curdle by threatening to "keep the Committee at work for two or three days." But having thoroughly enjoyed himself, and laughter being judiciously restrained, he at half-past twelve folded up his copy of the Bill, with its precious annotations, and withdrew from the Committee the light of his countenance. After this the Chairman disposed of amendments as fast as he could recite them. At ten minutes to one the Bill went through Committee, Mr. Dodds insisting on publicly shaking hands with the Attorney-General, much as Mr. Pumblechook shook hands with Pip in his hour of prosperity, by way of intimating that he had been his "earliest benefactor and founder of his fortun's."

July 20.—Lord Elcho in new quarters. Considering the many accustomed comforts the Earl of Wemyss left behind in the House of Commons, he gets on surprisingly well in the House of Lords. No one familiar with this great statesman and orator whilst yet Lord Elcho would have thought it possible he could have made a speech in the absence of Mr. Gladstone. Of late years all Lord Elcho's speeches in the House of Commons were personally addressed to the Minister whom he delights to call "my right hon. friend." Fixing the Premier, with glittering eye, and with right hand outstretched, as if literally feeling for his button-hole, he was wont to discourse for an hour at a time. Now he shows a disposition to select Earl Granville as the personal object of his speech. But life-long habitude is not to be conquered in a day or a Session; and besides, as Lord Randolph Churchill would testify, there is no man of his age upon whom expenditure in speech-making tells so well as upon Mr. Gladstone. Earl Granville sits and smiles pleasantly when the Earl of Wemyss reaches out to him with nervous forefinger feeling for his button-hole. He knows he is safe at this distance. It would be otherwise if he really were within arm's length of the garrulous Earl.

Another advantage which the new Earl loses in the Upper Chamber is that involved in possession of a seat on the front bench. In the House of Commons, having temporarily dispossessed one of the Fourth Party, who in their turn had ejected Mr. Bentinck, Lord Elcho was wont to stand well out on the floor of the House, so that he could get Mr. Gladstone in

range, and turn at will to wave his sword-arm towards any quarter of the House whence might come cries for the division, or other signs of human impatience. To be cooped up on the back seat of the cross benches, with only Earl Granville to play upon, and no exhilarating sounds of cheers or laughter, or other encouragement to starting off in a fresh place, is a combination of circumstances that goes far to make the reversion of a coronet seem dear.

The particular style of oratory which Lord Eleho practised in the House of Commons could prosper only amid the peculiar surroundings of the place. In the House of Commons, if a man says anything foolish or personal, or contrary to generally recognised facts, he is promptly and forcibly called to account. Lord Eleho, starting from this basis, never proceeded through thirty sentences before being pulled up. Thereupon was suggested fresh matter for the piling up of words, and when there was no further supply of material it had to be sought in the bringing about of some fresh interruption. His speeches were, in brief, like nothing so much as what is known in certain haunts of harmony as "a topical song." Each verse, though usually poor doggerel, is complete in itself. But you might leave out three or four verses or add as many without affecting the general bearing of the song. In the greater freedom of the House of Commons topics were plentifully supplied, and Lord Eleho, once on his legs, would take each up in turn and with more or less success would supply a verse.

In the Lords this source of inspiration fails him. The House of Commons sometimes shows signs of weariness when a bore is in possession ; but it begins fresh enough and gives every one a chance. The House of Lords begins by looking bored, and as the speech and the sitting advance its chill repulsion increases. The natural flow of spirits of the Earl of Wemyss, his perennial youth, and his impregnable self-satisfaction, have lightened this burden. But his fate is not without saddening effect upon the minds of heirs of peerages now sitting in the House of Commons who know it to be the forerunner of their own.

*Lord R. Churchill.* For a man of ability, ambition, and still under middle age, there are few things more calamitous than the call from the House of Commons to the House of

Lords. It is almost invariably the dirge of political extinction. An accident of birth has prevented the lamented death of the Duke of Marlborough from removing Lord Randolph Churchill to the Upper House. The escape is one for which both Houses, and, above all, the noble lord, have occasion to be thankful. His introduction on terms of fellowship with the company of cherubim and seraphim would be as appropriate as his ascension to the House of Lords, and would in either case probably be attended with similar results. His lightness of heart, his audacity of speech, and his total want of veneration, would in either case lead to a continuance of painful scenes probably ending in expulsion. It is easy to conceive that the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, with his traditional attributes of solemnity and mystic authority, would prove irresistible to the new peer, and on some occasion, *à propos des bottes*, he would fall upon His Grace and rate him, as, the other night, happening to catch sight of Mr. Herbert Gladstone sitting on the bench opposite, he witheringly addressed him as "the Junior Lord of the Treasury." The House of Commons is within due bounds a rough-and-tumble school of politics, where hard blows are given and taken, and the man who hits hardest is the most respected.

Lord Sherbrooke. The transformation of Mr. Lowe into Viscount Sherbrooke is a terrible example of the influence of the Upper Chamber. The bitter tongue that impartially rasped friend and foe is quiet. The keen intellect that flashed like a scimitar through all kinds of sophisms seems dulled. Night after night Lord Sherbrooke sits on the bench behind Ministers, peering about as if his eyes had not yet grown accustomed to the splendour of the scene. On the night when he first took his seat Lord Beaconsfield was present, and frequently glanced across at his former foe, with whom, amid exultant cheers, and all the inspiration of an excited throng of onlookers, he had often crossed swords in the other House. Doubtless he thought the time would come again, and in this new sphere he would have to gird up his loins to renew the old combat. Perhaps Mr. Lowe thought so too; but Viscount Sherbrooke has proved it otherwise, and the skilled debater, whose intervention in discussion in the House was ever the signal for the benches to fill up, and cheers and laughter

to follow successive hits, has only once opened his mouth in the House of Lords, and then to deliver a speech which Lord Aberdare might have made without any one suspecting it was not his own.

**Lord Roseberry.** Lord Rosebery coming to the place without the sense of contrast which strikes one accustomed to the House of Commons, illustrates the theme from a fresh point of view. If Lord Rosebery had had the good fortune to be a commoner, he would have made a first-class position in the Lower House. He is a ready, graceful speaker, has really studied public questions, regards them from a common-sense point of view and, not least essential, he has the great gift of humour. He has tried the House of Lords with many little sparkling speeches. There has been a ripple of laughter following upon the preliminary stare of well-bred surprise. But the net result is not encouraging.

**Lord Dunraven.** The Earl of Dunraven, another gifted but unhappy nobleman who has lost the opportunity of making a position in the House of Commons, has the advantage over Lord Rosebery that he is sounder on the land question. A peer who is right on that point at once establishes a claim to be heard, and when Lord Dunraven has fixed the attention of the House, his dry humour, his easy, almost colloquial style, and his firm grip of the question command attention. But even in this favoured instance it is a grudging kind of success that is secured. In fact, these young peers, with their latter-day views, their physical energy, and their heretical notions that questions should be thoroughly debated, are a source of some disquiet to their elders. Some time ago, in order to meet the growing demand from this quarter, it was agreed that the House should meet an hour earlier. The older peers thought that in cases where divisions were not imminent they might make their own speeches between four and six o'clock, and then get off for a canter or a drive before dinner and whilst the sun was still above the horizon. After that the young peers might make their speeches without hurting anybody. In cases where a division was expected this earlier meeting would enable the old stagers to make their speeches in time for the division to be

taken before dinner, instead of after, as of late sessions has happened with fatal frequency, the debate being dragged over the dinner hour, and so illimitable opportunity being provided for young peers to make callow speeches.

All this has a depressing effect upon new comers, more especially if fresh from the more wholesome atmosphere of the House of Commons—an atmosphere periodically cleared by thunder-storms. Lord Elcho was, from constitutional reasons, likely to feel it less than the average man, and he has justified the expectation by making a speech and carrying a division in the teeth alike of Ministers and leaders of the Opposition. To-night the Earl of Wemyss excelled himself, leading the Opposition to two Bills, prattling to their lordships about his kitchen arrangements, and babbling of excavations made in the green fields at the back of his house. But even Lord Wemyss will tone down in time, and the only consolation left to him will be that he may return to the House of Commons, and from the gallery look down upon the corner seat whence Lord Elcho on innumerable occasions, for full fifty minutes at a stretch, was wont to reach across the House in the endeavour to buttonhole Mr. Gladstone.

July 27.—Adrowsy Lord Richard Grosvenor fast asleep on the night Treasury bench; Mr. Cotes, with natural modesty, retired to a bench under the gallery at the remote end of the House, also fast asleep; and a general consciousness unexpressed that Lord Kensington is fast asleep on the bench at the door leading from the lobby—asleep with one eye open, and any member attempting to go out without having paired would ignominiously fail. These are signs of the times discovered by the well-disciplined member coming down at ten o'clock to-night, and wondering whether he has missed anything.

Mr. Salt. Mr. Salt was on his legs delivering a really admirable speech on the Education question. It would be more precise to say that he was on his leg, for, possibly owing to some subtle connection with his mental machinery, Mr. Salt found it impossible to discuss the operation of the Education Act unless he had one leg twisted round the other, and clear of the ground. This attitude, necessi-

tating as it did the support of the table, was not elegant; but it was evidently indispensable. From time to time he made gallant efforts to assume a more ordinary attitude; but as soon as he put both his feet to the ground his tongue faltered, his memory failed him, and the flow of his speech almost entirely stopped. Twisting one leg round the other, and leaning on the table at a bold angle, his memory cleared, speech flowed again, and the admirable discourse went forward.

**Mr. Mundella.** Mr. Mundella was wide awake on the bench opposite. He had last night all to himself and his department, and a very pleasant evening it had proved. Of the many happy fittings of men and office which mark the present Government none have been more felicitous than the appointment of Mr. Mundella to the Education Department. An enthusiast on behalf of education, it might perhaps have been supposed that he would go too far, and incur the odium of gentlemen opposite, whose views on the working of the Education Act do not on all points coincide with those of Liberal administrators. But, as abundant testimony was borne in the debate of last night, and as it was reiterated to-night, the Education Department under Mr. Mundella works with unparalleled smoothness and success. Compliments coming from the opposite party are viewed with suspicion, and are sometimes followed by complaints from the party amongst which the Minister sits. It has been Mr. Mundella's good fortune to hear himself and his work extolled by Lord George Hamilton and Mr. Lyulph Stanley, Mr. Talbot, and Mr. Henry Richard. This is enough to keep a man awake even on a Friday night at the end of July, and Mr. Mundella sat bolt upright, listening to Mr. Salt, marvelling why he should occasionally interpose in a speech of general fluency periods of hesitation, and all unconscious of the remarkable gymnastic performance going on below the level of the table that separated them.

**The Premier.** That Lord Richard Grosvenor should be asleep on the Treasury bench; that Mr. Cotes, dropping his head forward till he presented a curiously foreshortened appearance, chiefly hat, should slumber under the shade of

the gallery was reasonable enough. They have had late hours during the week, and possibly had prescience of the prolonged sitting that awaited them through the night, and did not close till daylight struggled with the gas and finally beat it. But why the Prime Minister should pretend to be asleep on the Treasury bench passes comprehension. He had been in his place at the morning sitting, and had galvanised a stillborn debate by the announcement that the House was really considering a vote of censure, and that if it were carried the Government would forthwith resign. He had been in his place assiduously throughout the week, amazing men by the fertility of his resource and the vigour of his bearing. He might surely now have gone home without anxiety. Mr. Salt, even when he succeeded in standing on one leg for fifteen minutes at a stretch, was not a dangerous personage, and Mr. Mundella could be trusted to answer for his department. The Premier evidently felt that a compromise was desirable. He could not resist the temptation of being present seeing that the House was still sitting. But at least he would go to sleep; so he lay back, artistically tucked his coat-tails between his knees, folded his arms, closed his eyes, and looked as if he slept, though his nervously twitching hands intimated that he was not only awake but that his brain was hard at work.

Mr. McCullagh-Torrens. Half an hour later relief came from an unexpected quarter. Mr. McCullagh-Torrens rose from a bench behind the Ministers against whom he habitually votes, and proceeded to deliver an address, presumably interesting but decidedly long. At this hour of the night, and in the prevailing circumstances, the interposition of Mr. Torrens is most grateful. He has a voice soft and low, a beautiful thing in a member of Parliament rediscussing at eleven o'clock on a Friday night a question that had already been fully debated through two nights. If the House desired to fully realise the advantage of Mr. Torrens's interposition it would suffice to suppose that this was a subject that interested Sir George Campbell, who had risen to wake the echoes of the place with reflections on the working of school boards.

But Sir G. Campbell was silent now, as were others near him, whilst the low level voice, like the murmuring of innumerable

bees, came from the back bench behind Ministers. Sir Stafford Northcote had come in whilst Mr. Salt was speaking, and had for some time been kept awake by admiration of a new pair of shoes he had put on with his dinner dress. But as Mr. Torrens's speech went forward he alternately eyed his shoes with increased drowsiness. Finally his chin sank on his breast, and he, too, slept. Even the restless energy of Mr. Gladstone was overcome: He was unmistakably asleep now, references cunningly introduced by Mr. McCullagh-Torrens to "the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government" wholly failing in their accustomed effect. As for Mr. Cotes he became dangerously foreshortened, threatening to topple over on to Colonel Nolan, who, comfortably disposed on the cross benches, slept, all unconscious of pending catastrophe. The wand of the enchanter was over the place. Mr. Torrens had transformed the House of Commons into the sleeping palace, where

— Rests the sap within the leaf,  
Here stays the blood along the veins.  
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
Like hints and echoes of the world  
To spirits folded in the womb.

Aug. 3.—The privilege of Royalty.

Among the questions to-night, Mr. Labouchere asked whether the Duke of Connaught received any pecuniary emolument as colonel of the Rifle Brigade, and as Colonel of the Scots Guards, to which he has just been appointed, and by what regulations these colonelcies were given. Lord Hartington stated that the Duke received no pay for either appointment. These colonelcies, as a rule, fell to the general officers of longest service. "But members of the Royal family had always been recognised as exceptionally situated." Mr. Healy asked whether the Duke of Connaught, by accepting these colonelcies, was shutting out other officers from promotion. Lord Hartington admitted that if the appointment had gone according to the ordinary rules, an officer of long service would have obtained it, and would have become entitled to £2,000 a year, the pay of a colonel. It was proposed that the army should be "compensated to a certain extent" by the appointment of a Field Marshal.

Aug. 9.—Imposing upon Mr. Gladstone.

The adage which affirms that some men may steal a horse, whilst others may not look over the hedge, is illustrated in Sir Stafford Northcote's case. On Tuesday the National Debt Bill had been roughly handled from various parts of the House without moving the sensibilities of the Premier. But when Sir Stafford rose and ventured to offer a few observations, Mr. Gladstone blazed forth in uncontrollable wrath, and stormed around his early pupil in finance as if he had committed the unpardonable sin. It is a notable fact that of late, undiscerned by the House, the Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition have abandoned the lifelong habit of alluding to each other as "my right hon. friend." It was a habit engendered by long and intimate personal relations, and was maintained by the esteem which prevailed through political differences. But it was often a little embarrassing. There were times when it was impossible for one or other to interchange this token of amity, and though the outbursts might be only temporary, it was awkward to speak of "my right hon. friend" on Monday, and of "the right hon. gentleman," on Tuesday, with other variations throughout what remained of the week. Who dropped it first it would be hard to say. But it is now dropped, to the deliverance of both.

It was when Sir Stafford Northcote had concluded his contribution to to-night's desultory debate on the Civil Service Estimates that the Premier slowly rose, and appeared at the table to claim the compassion of mankind. He had, he said, in a voice trembling with emotion, hoped to have been delivered from the necessity of making a speech. The House knew the unwillingness with which at any time he trespassed upon its indulgence. But just now, with August speeding through, and great arrears of business on hand, it was, above all things, necessary to economise time.

"But for the right hon. gentleman," he added, turning a withering glance upon the conscience-stricken leader of the Opposition, "I might have remained silent."

The Premier was appealing to an assembly that would fully appreciate the sacrifice he had most unwillingly felt called upon to make. It was probably with the object of economising time, and with a full sense of the preciousness of the material, that on Monday night he had made two long and important speeches on

the South African vote, there being before the House no serious challenge of the policy of the Government, and the Minister in charge of the estimates having exhaustively replied on such debate as had arisen. The same sentiment had doubtless weighed with him on Tuesday, when, Mr. Childers having fully explained the bearings of the National Debt Bill, he had flung himself into the discussion, and delivered an elaborate speech which covered all that had been said before, and made it impossible for any one to add further arguments in support of the measure.

With a consciousness of the stern exercise of virtue on these occasions, he, to-night, approached the table steadily, slowly, and with an air of injured innocence that made his hearers involuntarily turn to regard with indignation the right honourable gentleman sitting opposite, with head bent, and a hand hidden up either coat sleeve. It was presumable that Sir Stafford Northcote himself only now realised the full measure of his offence. If he had thought of it perhaps he would not have done it. Being done, there was nothing for it but to sit in mute abasement, conscious of a hundred pair of indignant eyes focussed upon him, and, above all, of the wrathful visage bent upon him from the other side of the table, and of the outstretched hand that called Heaven and earth to witness the enormity of his guilt. It was not without a feeling of relief that the House observed Mr. Gladstone's speedy recovery from the condition of body and mind into which he had been thrown when he at last found himself drawn into debate. Once embarked upon the task, the dejected mien, the tearful voice, and the piteous appeal for sympathy with which he had pointed Sir Stafford Northcote's transgression, vanished, and he went forward with the grace, the ease, and the strength of a lusty greyhound joyfully released from the leash.

Aug. 11.—Hard work. The House of Commons rose at twenty minutes to three this morning, which, as things go just now, is rather early. On the other two nights of the week on which it has sat, it has risen at three o'clock and at a quarter to four. This would be bad at any period of the session, even in the first months when men come fresh to the work. But just now, in the seventh month of a heavy session, it is both physically and mentally trying. A good many members settle

the matter by bringing about a prorogation of their own. They pair for the session, and go off to flood or fell, where doubtless they find an added zest to their leisure by reading in the papers how, after prolonged preliminary debate, the House settled down between one and two in the morning to its work, and, to quote the now stereotyped conclusion of the Parliamentary reports in the London morning papers, "remained sitting till a late hour."

One of the few men who show no sign of fatigue is the Premier. He has been exceptionally busy this week, making two big speeches on Monday, one on Tuesday, and another last night, besides bearing the brunt of the battle at question time. But he comes to his work as fresh as a lark, sits through more hours than any other member and is as late as most, whilst his marvellous facility and felicity of speech-making strike with fresh wonder even those long familiar with his power. He is, according to all appearances, as well now, at the end of a hard session, as he has been at any time since he took office.

Aug. 17.—Near the end. Sir Richard Cross stretched across space, with his head resting on the back of the front Opposition bench, and his feet disposed on the table, presented at one o'clock this morning a fitting embodiment of the power and grace of Her Majesty's Opposition at the fag end of the session. He had the bench all to himself, save for the occasional appearance of Mr. Rowland Winn and Lord Crichton, who were apparently enjoying a game of "follow my leader." At one time Mr. Winn, after forlornly strolling about the Bar, would come up to the front bench, sit down for a few minutes, and then disappear. A few minutes later Lord Crichton, exactly imitating his colleague, presented himself at the Bar, and after aimlessly passing up and down and gazing round the House, walked down, seated himself where Mr. Winn had rested, and then disappeared, Mr. Winn, turning up with remarkable regularity a few moments later, with Lord Crichton to follow. Like persons moving on parallel lines, they never met; Mr. Winn was always too soon at the rendezvous for Lord Crichton, and Lord Crichton was invariably two minutes late for Mr. Winn. It must have been an interesting game, as it was pursued so persistently. But there was about it a melancholy, low-spirited air, which, in truth, pervaded the almost empty House.

Lord Mayor      Some members resisted the prevailing languor,  
Dawson.      but they were few in number. Prominent among them was Lord Mayor Dawson, who, Colossus like, bestrides two capitals. He is Lord Mayor in Dublin and a legislator at Westminster. Some people have time to rest, and may, without reproach, yield to the influence of the season. But Lord Mayor Dawson is always awake to his responsibilities. There is eternity to rest in. In the meanwhile Dublin must be looked after, and the interests of the Empire generally safeguarded. Whilst others lounge about, the Lord Mayor sits bolt upright, with one knee crossed over the other, for the greater convenience of making notes. Ordinary people may speak right off without preparation; a Lord Mayor never. Who knows what evil a phrase hastily uttered might not effect? So the Lord Mayor makes voluminous notes, secretly conscious of the tinkling of the large medal and chain which he wears night and day in sign of his Lord Mayoral dignity. At home he has a chain of more striking proportions. The House of Commons has been privileged to witness it, what time the Lord Mayor, clad in scarlet gown, with velvet shorts and steel-buckle shoes, has presented a petition on behalf of the Corporation. It would obviously be inconvenient to go about with that, so the Lord Mayor has had one made in miniature, which he wears round his neck with a medal pendant. A pleasing jingle it makes as he walks or stoops, inspiriting as to the warrior's ears the clang of sabre or armed heel.

Presently the Lord Mayor rises, and, having adjusted his trousers, which invariably soar above his boots when he sits in his favourite attitude of cross-legged contemplation, he proceeds to address the House. Doubtless he is familiar with Ovid's description of the mannerism of Ulysses when before the Grecian chiefs he pleaded for the arms of Achilles:—

Oculos, paulum tellure moratos,  
Sustulit ad proceres; expectatoque resolvit  
Ora sono; nec abest facundis gratia dictis.

Whether the manner be imitative, or whether, what is more probable, it is the natural similitude of two great men born in different ages, cannot be determined. But it is true that the Lord Mayor, having caught the Speaker's eye, drops his own, and

with folded arms gazes for a moment on the ground. Then, taking in the listening senate at a glance, he proceeds with his oration.

Another member who is also wide-awake in spite of having spent the week, like Paul, "fighting with beasts at Ephesus," is Mr. Trevelyan. It must have conveyed a curious notion of Parliament to the stranger in the gallery to have heard the Chief Secretary a little earlier discoursing on poets and poetry, the time being midnight on the 17th of August, and sixty-eight votes to be got to complete Committee of Supply. Mr. T. P. O'Connor had brought with him a copy of a schoolbook, out of which he made some cheap fun. On the impetus of this penny-reading pleasantry, Mr. Trevelyan had, with great zest, entered upon a disquisition on the comparative merits of Tom Moore, and some lesser known, but not less gifted, Irish poets, of whom he spoke with a respect that called forth a dignified and approving cheer from the Lord Mayor.

This speech did not look like business, but it really was business, and supplied a fresh illustration of the natural fitness of Mr. Trevelyan for the office he fills. He is a great deal more than an official, or he would not get on with the Irish members as he does—that is to say, much better than any Chief Secretary for the last ten years. He knows how to be firm, as was testified at the morning sitting, when, amid cheers from all parts of the House, he declined to answer further questions from Mr. Healy about Sub-Inspector Cameron, till the member for Monaghan had withdrawn a cowardly imputation, made under the privileges and with the publicity of Parliament, upon an absent and defenceless woman. There was a note of chivalry about that which would find an echo even in Ireland. These occasional exhibitions of one side of his character lend the fuller grace to his more ordinary manner of courteous conciliation and much enduring patience.

Nobody else was really wide awake, not even Mr. Gladstone, who, with remarkable self-restraint, had been absent throughout the evening sitting, and had "just looked in" before going home to bed. After his manner when he desires to intimate that he is merely a stray visitor, and has nothing to do with the business of the evening, the Premier sat at the lower end of the bench; he looked fagged and wearied, an exception to his ordinary appear-

ance of late. He has seemed to thrive on accumulated work, and has rarely been so hearty, and even so jocund, as during the past few weeks, dating specifically, perhaps, from the night when he announced the withdrawal of the Government from the negotiations with M. de Lesseps in the matter of the Suez Canal.

Sir Lyon Playfair, having delivered one of his excellent series of lectures, had relapsed into quiescence. Even he, in the absence of means of practical illustration, had failed to secure that entranced attention which he is accustomed to find accompanying his lectures. The subject had not lent itself readily to samples. When you treat of oleo-margarine, it is simply a matter of pots, of convenience of displaying them on the table, and handing them round to be tasted. But you cannot very well bring in a sample boy or girl when lecturing on the Irish educational system. The instincts of the professor were so strong that Sir Lyon made a feeble attempt to trot out Mr. O'Donnell as an example of what might be done by an Irish college. But the House visibly shuddered at the reference, and Sir Lyon, as it were, hastily put the sample back in the drawer, and proceeded on another tack. Mr. O'Donnell has been mercifully absent of late. What if this reference were to bring him up, and now, at one o'clock in the morning, he were to rise, fix his eye-glass, and proceed to discuss things generally!

Sir Richard Cross, temporarily leader of the Opposition, did not find himself in command of large forces. In truth, as he on the front bench alone represented the leaders, Sir Walter Barttelot solely answered for the rank and file. Even Mr. Warton had gone away, giving himself a holiday on account of the Cruelty to Animals Bill having been thrown out in the House of Lords. Why Sir Walter Barttelot should stop no one could say, unless it were that he feared to lose an opportunity of asking the House to "let me go one step farther," or of assuring it that "I am one of those" or "I am not one of those" as the case might be. Sir Charles Forster, fresh from Lord Granville's dinner, and wondering whether it was there he left his hat, sat on the edge of the bench with his hands resting on his knee and his brow wrinkled with agonised thought. He had charge of a series of motions for returns, each attractive in itself, but the aggregate capable of added interest if he

could have framed a motion for a return of how many “steps farther” Sir W. Barttelot had gone in the session now expiring, and whether balancing the affirmative with the negative, the hon. baronet was “one of those” or was not. At present Sir Walter was distinguished by an amount of officering which exceeds even that of the private in the army that basks on the sunny heights of Monaco. He was not simply “one of those” who form the Conservative Opposition. He *was* the Conservative Opposition, with Sir Richard Cross to lead him, and two Whigs to “tell” his solitary vote should it be called for in the exigencies of debate.

Aug. 25.—Proro- Parliament prorogued with the unexciting for-  
gation. malities attendant upon a Royal Commission.

#### CALENDAR OF THE SESSION.

##### FEBRUARY.

15. Thurs.—Privilege (Mr. Healy's Imprisonment). Motion for a Committee. *Mr. Parnell.* Division—For, 47. Against, 353.
- H. M. Speech. Address thereon. Amendment (British Forces in Egypt), *Sir W. Lawson.* Debate adjourned.
16. Fri.—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment proposed (*Mr. A. Balfour*) to Sir W. Lawson's Amendment negatived. Division on Sir W. Lawson's Amendment.—Ayes, 144. Noes, 179.
19. Mon.—H. M. Speech. Address. 3rd Debate. Parliamentary Oaths Act Amendment Bill. *Mr. Attorney-General.* Read 1<sup>st</sup>.
20. Tues.—H. M. Speech. Address. 4th Debate. Amendment (Condition of Ireland), *Mr. Gorst.*
21. Wed.—H. M. Speech. Address. 5th Debate. *Mr. Gorst's* Amendment.
22. Thurs.—H. M. Speech. Address. 6th Debate. *Mr. Gorst's* Amendment. Division on Mr. O'Kelly's suspension—Ayes, 305. Noes, 20.
23. Fri.—H. M. Speech. Address. 7th Debate. Division on Mr. Gorst's Amendment—For, 176. Against, 259.
26. Mon.—H. M. Speech. Address. 8th Debate. Amendment (Crimes Act, &c., Ireland), *Mr. Parnell.* Division—For, 15. Against, 133.
27. Tues.—H. M. Speech. Address. 9th Debate. Amendment (Distress, Ireland), *Mr. A. O'Connor.*
28. Wed.—Ditto. 10th Debate.

##### MARCH.

1. Thurs.—H. M. Speech. Address. 11th Debate. Division on Amendment (Distress, Ireland)—For, 32. Against, 163. Address agreed to. Report of Address agreed to.
2. Fri.—Compulsory Education (Ireland). Motion, *Mr. O'Shaughnessy.* Agreed to.
- Military Operations (Egypt). Motion, *Sir W. Lawson.* Division—For, 24. Against, 94.
- Supply. Sir A. Otway took the Chair. Army Supplementary Estimates.
5. Mon.—Supply: Supplementary Estimates.
6. Tues.—Private Bill Legislation. Motion, *Mr. Craig-Sellar.* Counted out.
7. Wed.—Cruelty to Animals Bill. *Mr. Anderson.* Division—For, 195. Against, 40. Bill committed.
8. Thurs.—Supply: Supplementary Estimates.
9. Fri.—Factory and Education (Scotland) Acts. Motion. *Mr. Cochran-Patrick.* Supply: Supplementary Estimates.
10. Sat.—Supply: Supplementary Estimates.
12. Mon.—Supply: Army Estimates. Statement, *Marquis of Hartington.*
13. Tues.—Harbours (East Coast) Select Committee. *Mr. Marjoribanks.* South Africa (The Transvaal). Motion, *Mr. Gorst.* 1<sup>st</sup> Debate.
14. Wed.—Land Law (Ireland) Act Amendment Bill. *Mr. Parnell.* 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading. Division—For, 63. Against, 250.
15. Thurs.—The Marines. Motion, *Mr. Hopwood.* Supply: Navy Estimates. Statement *Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.* Civil Services. Votes on account.

## MARCH (continued).

16. *Fri.*—Morning Sitting. South Africa (The Transvaal). Motion, *Mr. Gorst*. 2nd Debate.

19. *Mon.*—Bankruptcy Bill. *Mr. Chamberlain*. Read 2<sup>o</sup>.

20. *Tues.*—Ditto. Committed to a Standing Committee.

29. *Thurs.*—Inland Postal Telegrams. Motion, *Dr. Cameron*. Division—For, 68. Against, 50.

Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

30. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Reform. Motion, *Mr. A. Arnold*. Counted out.

## APRIL.

2. *Mon.*—Court of Criminal Appeal Bill. *Mr. Attorney-General*. Read 2<sup>o</sup> (Division—For, 132. Against, 78) and referred to a Standing Committee.

3. *Tues.*—Africa (River Congo). Motion, *Mr. Jacob Bright*, withdrawn, and Motion, *Mr. Wodehouse*, agreed to.

Opium Duties (China). Motion, *Sir J. Pease*. Previous Question, *Lord E. Fitzmaurice*, proposed. Division—Ayes, 66. Noes, 126.

4. *Wed.*—Vivisection (Abolition) Bill. *Mr. R. T. Reid*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.

5. *Thurs.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Mr. Childers*.

6. *Fri.*—National Expenditure. Motion, *Mr. Rylands*. Amended and agreed to.

9. *Mon.*—Explosive Substances Bill. *Sir W. Harcourt* 1<sup>o</sup>, 2<sup>o</sup>, committed and read 3<sup>o</sup>.

Ways and Means. Public Expenditure. Motion, *Mr. Hubbard*, withdrawn. Resolutions reported.

10. *Tues.*—Business of House (Counts Out). Motion, *Sir H. Vivian*, withdrawn. Distress (Ireland). Motion, *Mr. O'Connor Power*, negatived.

11. *Wed.*—Elective Councils (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Barry*. Division on 2nd Reading—Ayes, 58. Noes, 231.

12. *Thurs.*—Criminal Code (Indictable Offences) Bill. *Mr. Attorney-General*. Read 2<sup>o</sup>.

13. *Fri.*—South Africa (The Transvaal). Motion, *Mr. Gorst*. 3rd Debate. House counted out at 9 o'clock.

16. *Mon.*—Lords Wolseley and Alcester. Pensions. Committee. Criminal Code (Indictable Offences) Bill. Committed to a Standing Committee. Patents for Inventions Bill. *Mr. Chamberlain*. Read 2<sup>o</sup> and committed to a Standing Committee.

17. *Tues.*—Local Taxation. Motion, *Mr. Pell*. Division—Ayes, 217. Noes, 229.

18. *Wed.*—Parochial Boards (Scotland) Bill. *Dr. Cameron*. Division on 2nd Reading—Ayes, 91. Noes, 83.

19. *Thurs.*—Lord Alcester's Annuity Bill. Division on 2nd Reading—Ayes, 217. Noes, 85.

Lord Wolseley's Annuity Bill. Division on 2nd Reading—Ayes, 178. Noes, 55.

20. *Fri.*—Contagious Diseases Acts. Motion, *Mr. Stanfield*. Division—For, 182. Against, 110.

23. *Mon.*—Parliamentary Oaths Act Amendment Bill. *Mr. Attorney-General*. 2nd Reading, 1st Debate.

24. *Tues.*—Metropolitan District Railway Bill. Division on 2nd Reading—Ayes, 200. Noes, 110.

Steamship "Leon XIII." Motion, *Dr. Cameron*. House counted out.

25. *Wed.*—Cemeteries Bill. *Mr. Richard*. 2nd Reading. Debate adjourned.

26. *Thurs.*—Parliamentary Oaths Act Amendment Bill. 2nd Reading. 2nd Debate.

27. *Fri.*—Local Option. Motion, *Sir W. Lawson*. Division—For, 206. Against, 130.

30. *Mon.*—Parliamentary Oaths Act Amendment Bill. 2nd Reading. 3rd Debate.

## MAY.

1. *Tues.*—London and North-Western Railway, &c., Bill. Consideration, Division—For, 178. Against, 167.

Parliamentary Oaths Act Amendment Bill. 2nd Reading. 4th Debate.

2. *Wed.*—Ascension Day. Motion (Meeting of Committees), *Mr. Gladstone*. Division—Ayes, 69. Noes, 20.

Limited Partnerships Bill. *Mr. Monk*. 2nd Reading. Division—For, 49. Against, 159.

3. *Thurs.*—Parliamentary Oaths Act Amendment Bill. 2nd Reading. 5th Debate. Division—For, 289. Against, 292.

4. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Oath. *Mr. Bradlaugh*'s application to take the Oath. Motion against, *Sir Stamford Northcote*. Division on Previous Question, *Mr. Labouchere*—Ayes, 271. Noes, 165.

Railway Commission. Motion, *Mr. B. Samuelson*.

Constabulary (Ireland) Pay, &c., Bill. *Mr. Trevelyan*. Read 1<sup>o</sup>.

*Mon.*—Contagious Diseases Act. Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. Paleston*. Supply: Navy Estimates.

8. *Tues.*—London and North-Western Railway, &c., Bill. 3rd Reading. Division—For, 173. Against, 157.

Southport Foresore. Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. Jesse Collings*.

East India (Expenditure). Motion, *Mr. E. Stanhope*. Amendment proposed, *Mr. Onslow*. Debate adjourned.

9. *Wed.*—Theatres Regulation Bill. *Mr. Dixon-Hartland*. Division on 2nd Reading—For, 22. Against, 141.

Factory, &c., Act Amendment Bill. *Mr. Broadhurst*. Division on 2nd Reading—For, 44. Against, 124.

10. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates, Agricultural Holdings (England) Bill. *Mr. Dodson*. Read 1<sup>o</sup>.

11. *Fri.*—Adjournment over Whitsuntide. Debate on Spain (Cuban Refugees), *Sir R. Cross*.

21. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

22. *Tues.*—Derby Day. Adjournment. Motion, *Sir H. Maxwell*. Division—Ayes, 185. Noes, 85.

East India. Financial Statement. Motion, *Mr. R. Fowler*.

24. *Thurs.*—Supply: Army Estimates.

## MAY (continued).

25. *Fri.*—Armenia, &c. Motion, *Mr. Bryce*. Agreed to.

28. *Mon.*—Seizure of the “Kerry Sentinel.” Motion for Adjournment, *Mr. Harrington*. Division—Ayes, 137. Noes, 135. Supply: Civil Service Estimates. Constabulary, &c., Ireland (Pay, &c.), Bill. Committee.

29. *Tues.*—Agricultural Holdings (England) Bill. Bill committed.

30. *Wed.*—Sale of Intoxicating Liquors, Sunday (Durham), Bill. *Mr. T. Fry*. 2nd Reading. Division—For, 153. Against, 57.

31. *Thurs.*—Privilege (Mr. McCoan and Mr. O’Kelly). Motion, That Mr. O’Kelly do attend in his place to-morrow, *Mr. Gladstone*. Division—Ayes, 250. Noes, 10. Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

## JUNE.

1. *Fri.*—Privilege (Mr. McCoan and Mr. O’Kelly). *Mr. O’Kelly’s* Explanation. Inland Revenue (Circular). Motion, *Lord R. Churchill*. Division—For, 37. Against, 120.

Army (Recruiting). Observations, *Sir W. Barttelot*.

4. *Mon.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Bill committed.

5. *Tues.*—Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Bill. Bill committed. House counted out at 9 o’clock.

6. *Wed.*—Standing Orders (Private Bills). New Standing Order, Payment of interest out of capital. Division—Ayes, 131. Noes, 123.

7. *Thurs.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.

8. *Fri.*—Lord Alcester’s Grant Bill. Debate on going into Committee. 1st Debate. Supply. Observations, Inhabited House Duty, *Mr. Alderman Lawrence*. Business of the House, *Mr. C. Bentinck*. Trial of Suleiman Sami. *Sir Stafford Northcote*.

11. *Mon.*—Trial of Suleiman Sami, Motion for Adjournment, *Sir Stafford Northcote*. Lord Alcester’s Grant Bill. Division on going into Committee—For, 229. Against, 45. Bill reported.

Lord Wolseley’s Grant Bill. Division on going into Committee—For 43. Against, 25. Bill reported.

12. *Tues.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee, 2nd Sitting. Land Law (Ireland) Act (Purchase Clauses). Motion, *Lord Geo. Hamilton*. Agreed to.

13. *Wed.*—Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. McCoan*. Bill committed.

14. *Thurs.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 3rd Sitting.

15. *Fri.*—Ditto. 4th Sitting. House counted out at 2 o’clock.

18. *Mon.*—Privilege. Speech of Mr. John Bright. Motion, *Sir Stafford Northcote*. Division—Ayes, 117. Noes, 151. Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 5th Sitting.

19. *Tues.*—Ditto. 6th Sitting. Vaccination. Motion, *Mr. P. A. Taylor*. Division on Sir Lyon Playfair’s Amendment—For, 286. Against, 16.

20. *Wed.*—Sea Fisheries (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. O’Kelly*. Bill committed. Vice Royalty (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. J. McCarthy*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.

21. *Thurs.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 7th Sitting.

22. *Fri.*—Ditto. 8th Sitting. Local Government Board (Ireland). Motion, *Col. Colthurst*. Division—For, 24. Against, 82.

25. *Mon.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 9th Sitting.

26. *Tues.*—Ditto. 10th Sitting. House counted out at 9 o’clock.

27. *Wed.*—Irish Reproductive Loan, &c., Bill. *Mr. Blake*. Bill committed. Imprisonment for Debt Bill. *Mr. Anderson*. Bill withdrawn. House counted out at 4.30 o’clock.

28. *Thurs.*—Supply: Army and Navy Estimates.

29. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 11th Sitting. Minister of Education. Motion, *Sir J. Lubbock*. Division on Sir Lyon Playfair’s Amendment—Against, 8. For, 104.

## JULY.

2. *Mon.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 12th Sitting.

3. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 13th do.

4. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 14th do.

5. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 15th do.

6. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 16th do. Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women). Motion, *Mr. H. Mason*. Division—For, 114. Against, 130.

9. *Mon.*—Parliamentary Oath (Mr. Bradlaugh). Resolution, *Sir S. Northcote*, for the exclusion of Mr. Bradlaugh from the House. Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 17th Sitting.

10. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 18th Sitting. Importation of Foreign Animals. Resolution, *Mr. Chaplin*.

11. *Wed.*—Suez Canal. Ministerial Statement, *Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*. Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 19th Sitting.

12. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates. Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt Practices) Bill. Committee. 20th Sitting.

13. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 21st do. Bill reported.

16. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates.

17. *Tues.*—Agricultural Holdings (England) Bill. Committee, 1st Sitting.

18. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd do.

## JULY (continued).

19. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 3rd do.  
 20. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 4th do.  
 Peasant Proprietary (Tenure of Land).  
 Motion, *Mr. Jesse Collings*. House  
 counted out.  
 23. *Mon.*—Suez Canal. Ministerial Statement,  
*Mr. Gladstone*.  
 Agricultural Holdings (England) Bill.  
 Committee. 5th Sitting.  
 24. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 6th Sitting. Bill  
 reported.  
 25. *Wed.*—Agricultural Holdings (Scotland)  
 Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.  
 26. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Esti-  
 mates.  
 27. *Fri.*—East India (Expenditure). Motion,  
*Mr. E. Stanhope*. Division on Amend-  
 ment, *Mr. Onslow*—Ayes, 55. Noes,  
 210. Motion agreed to.  
 Agricultural Holdings (England) Bill.  
 Report. 1st Debate.  
 Education Act. Motion, *Mr. Salt*. Di-  
 vision—For, 74. Against, 102.  
 30. *Mon.*—Suez Canal Company. Motion, *Sir*  
*S. Northcote*. Division on Amendment,  
*Mr. Norwood*—For, 282. Against, 183.  
 Constabulary, &c. (Ireland), Bill. *Mr.*  
*Trevelyan*. Read 1<sup>st</sup>.  
 Parochial Charities (London) Bill. Passed.  
 31. *Tues.*—Agricultural Holdings (England)  
 Bill. Report. 2nd Debate. To be  
 read 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
 Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Bill.  
 Committee. 3rd Sitting.

## AUGUST.

1. *Wed.*—Agricultural Holdings (England)  
 Bill. Passed.  
 Ditto (Scotland) Bill. Committee. 4th  
 Sitting. Bill reported.  
 2. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 3. *Fri.*—Local Government Board (Scotland)  
 Bill. *Sir W. Harcourt*. Debate on 2nd  
 Reading adjourned. House counted  
 out at 9.  
 4. *Sat.*—Parliamentary Registration (Ireland)  
 Bill. *Mr. Trevelyan*. Bill committed.  
 Local Government Board (Scotland) Bill.  
 Bill committed.  
 Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Bill.  
 Considered and passed.  
 6. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 7. *Tues.*—National Debt Bill. *Mr. Chancellor*  
 of the Exchequer. Bill committed.  
 Tramways (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Trevelyan*.  
 Read 1<sup>st</sup>.  
 8. *Wed.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt  
 Practices) Bill. Debate on Considera-  
 tion adjourned.  
 9. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 10. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Elections (Corrupt  
 Practices) Bill. Consideration re-  
 sumed. Bill passed.  
 11. *Sat.*—Supreme Court of Judicature (New  
 Rules). Motion, *Sir R. Cross*. Di-  
 vision—Ayes, 49. Noes, 71.  
 Bankruptcy Bill. Considered.  
 13. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 National Debt Bill. Committee.  
 14. *Tues.*—Parliamentary Registration (Ire-  
 land) Bill. Committee.  
 Bankruptcy Bill. Considered and passed.  
 15. *Wed.*—Local Government Board (Scotland)  
 Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.  
 16. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 Local Government Board (Scotland) Bill.  
 Committee. 2nd Sitting. Bill re-  
 ported.  
 17. *Fri.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.  
 Tramways, &c. (Ireland), Bill. Com-  
 mittee. Bill reported.  
 18. *Sat.*—Supply: Civil Service and Army  
 Estimates.  
 26. *Mon.*—Supply. Report. The Approp-  
 priation Bill. Read 1<sup>st</sup>.  
 21. *Tues.*—The Appropriation Bill. Read 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
 Agricultural Holdings (England) Bill.  
 Lords Amendments considered.  
 22. *Wed.*—East India. Financial Statement,  
*Mr. J. K. Cross*.  
 23. *Thurs.*—The Appropriation Bill. Passed.  
 25. *Sat.*—The Prorogation.

## SESSION 1884.

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### CHAPTER XXVII.

#### MR. BRADLAUGH TAKES THE OATH.

Baker Pasha's Defeat—The Chief Secretary—Mr. Bradlaugh takes the Oath again and Votes Three Times—A Family Correspondence—M. Clemenceau—Two Speakers: A Contrast—Dr. Lyons—Mr. John Morley—"A Tory"—Not to be Gulled—Three Orators from Ireland—Ex-Lord Mayor Dawson—Sir P. O'Brien.

Feb. 5.—Baker The fifth session of the tenth Parliament of Pasha's defeat. Queen Victoria was opened this afternoon by Royal Commission. The Lord Chancellor having read the Queen's Speech, Lord Tweeddale rose to move the Address. Towards the close of the speech Lord Skelmersdale brought into the House and handed to Lord Salisbury a telegram which announced the defeat of Baker Pasha's forces. Lord Salisbury opened it, read it, and handed it to the Duke of Richmond, who passed it to Lord Cranbrook. It was then sent on to the benches behind, and passed up and down during the close of Lord Tweeddale's speech and the opening of Lord Vernon's.

Feb 8.—The Everything is going on wonderfully well as far as Chief Secretary. Ireland is concerned. There is no one particular in prison just now. Nobody has been shot recently. Mr. Tim Healy is away writing pamphlets with pleasant titles, Mr. Clifford Lloyd is in Egypt, and even Mr. Harrington has grown a little weary of that plank bed, every square inch of which is as well known in the House of Commons as if members had passed upon it a month of all-night sittings. The only sign of the depth and strength of the undercurrent of affairs in Ireland is the whitening beard of the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant. But a year or two ago Mr. Trevelyan was a light-hearted young man, with his seat below the gangway, and his only care the difficulty of saying something new in his annual speech on the assimilation of the franchise. He is

now the incumbent of an office to the labours of which the recess brings no surcease, and successive nights in the House of Commons only bring fresh questions.

There is something very striking in the contrast of the manner of Mr. Forster and that of his successor at the Irish Office. When Irish questions are to the fore—that is to say generally—Mr. Forster almost ostentatiously takes his seat, spreading himself in opulent fashion over the corner seat and across the gangway. Now that he has finally subdued Dr. Lyons, and secured possession of his seat, he has no care except for the Transvaal, and that to a man who governed Ireland for two years is mere child's play. He can come down when questions are half through if he pleases. He can, at least, affect to sleep while Mr. Parnell is addressing the House, and may go to dinner in the mid-heat of an Irish debate. But Mr. Trevelyan is always chained to the oar, and if his step grows listless and his beard grey before his time he has only the consolation of reflection that Ministries do not last for ever, and that there will come a time when he, too, may sit or lounge about and watch some one else growing prematurely old in the effort to govern Ireland.

Feb. 11. — Mr.  
Bradlaugh  
takes the oath  
again and votes  
three times.

When the questions in the House of Commons yesterday were three parts through Mr. Bradlaugh, who had since four o'clock been sitting in his usual seat under the gallery, moved down and took up his position at the Bar. Here he was presently joined by Mr. Burt and Mr. Labouchere, who stood on either side of him, after the manner of gentlemen about to introduce a newly elected member. Almost before the answer to the last printed question had been uttered, and before opportunity was given for the not infrequent rush of questions without notice, Mr. Bradlaugh was discovered walking at a hurried pace up the floor of the House, with Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Burt gallantly endeavouring to keep up with him. As he neared the table the Speaker rose, and reading from a document in his hand, called upon Mr. Bradlaugh to withdraw until the House had considered what course it should take on the position assumed by him.

Meanwhile Mr. Bradlaugh was quite busy at the end of the table. From his breast pocket he produced a book (which

Lord R. Churchill subsequently undertook to say was not a Testament), and, whispering a few words over its cover, hurriedly kissed it and thrust it back in his pocket. He next produced two pieces of paper, and, signing one, left them both on the box on which Mr. Gladstone is accustomed to enforce his arguments. This accomplished, amid some cries of "Order!" he bowed to the Speaker, continuing to make obeisance as he retired backward to the Bar, whence he made his way to his old place, and prepared quietly to enjoy what might follow.

What did follow was up to a certain point the procedure familiar to the House by much repetition. Sir Stafford Northcote moved the old resolution demanding that Mr. Bradlaugh be not permitted to go through the form of using the oath. Mr. Labouchere rose, and was greeted with cries of "Gladstone, Gladstone!" In response, the Premier appeared at the table. He intimated that since it had been shown that a private person could not bring an action against Mr. Bradlaugh for breaking the law by sitting and voting without having taken the oath, if he now sat and voted it would be the duty of the law officers of the Crown to take up the case. He added that his opinion remained the same as it was; but he also thought it was not the duty of a minority to resist the opinion of a majority of the House.

During this speech the Clerk at the Table had impounded the papers left on the box by Mr. Bradlaugh. Lord Randolph Churchill's lynx eye noting this, he asked that they might be put back, in order that members might inspect them, with a view to giving evidence in a court of law. The Speaker said the documents were now in the custody of the Clerk, and might be inspected by any member.

Mr. Newdegate here rose, but was ignored by Mr. Healy, who, taking note of the fact that Mr. Bradlaugh was still seated under the gallery, asked the Speaker whether he had withdrawn. He desired the information, he said, for the guidance of Sir Henry Brand's successor in the Chair. He had himself been suspended three times. It might happen again, and it would be well to know whether, having been ordered to withdraw, he might return to an enjoyable nook under the gallery. This question being frequently pressed upon the attention of the Speaker, he pointed out that Mr. Bradlaugh

was in the position of a duly elected member who had not yet taken the oath, and therefore within his privilege of remaining below the Bar.

At a quarter to seven, the proceeding hitherto having lasted exactly an hour, Sir Stafford Northcote's resolution was being put by the Speaker, when Mr. O'Donnell shouted out that Mr. Bradlaugh intended to go through the form of giving a vote, and demanding that he should withdraw. The Speaker, not departing from his former ruling, Mr. O'Donnell angrily called out,

“I ask you to order Mr. Bradlaugh to withdraw from the House in exactly the same sense in which you ordered me to withdraw when I was suspended.”

Mr. T. D. Sullivan, with the ingenuous air of one seeking for information, asked whether an incomplete member, a half member, has rights superior to those of a whole member—a conundrum which the Speaker did not attempt to answer. Mr. Sexton brought this outbreak to a head by moving to add to Sir Stafford Northcote's resolution words prohibiting Mr. Bradlaugh from voting thereupon. Before this could be put Mr. O'Donnell interposed with a fresh question.

“Have you,” he said, fixing the Speaker with his eye-glass, “given instructions to record the vote of Mr. Bradlaugh.”

“I am astonished that a member should put such a question,” the Speaker answered with dignity; “I have given no special instructions in the matter.”

Mr. Gladstone pointed out that the amendment, if carried, would scarcely secure the avowed purpose of preventing Mr. Bradlaugh from voting. If a division took place on the amendment he would vote, and so secure his purpose. The absurdity of the amendment being thus demonstrated, it was hastily withdrawn.

The tellers returning from the division lobby, Mr. Healy and Mr. O'Donnell, being seated with their hats on, according to custom when addressing the Chair after the House has been cleared for a division, attempted to renew the conversation with the Speaker as to the presence of Mr. Bradlaugh, who, having with great alacrity gone out to vote in the division, had now returned, and was beaming upon the House from under the gallery. Then a new idea occurred to Mr. Healy. He proposed

to move, in order, as he said, that "no basis should be given for a mock action in the courts of law," that the House should pass a resolution disallowing the vote Mr. Bradlaugh had just given. This new manœuvre was loudly applauded by the Conservatives. Mr. Healy, passing down to the table to frame his amendment, had the advantage of a whispered consultation with Sir Hardinge Giffard, the late Solicitor-General.

All this time the tellers were standing at the table ready to declare the figures. Mr. Labouchere, who was one of them, perceiving another debate about to open, retired to his place and proposed to take part in it, an innovation which Lord Claud Hamilton resented, but which the Speaker ruled was not out of order. The Attorney-General, with some difficulty finding opportunity to say a few words amid the angry shouts of the Conservatives, pointed out that if such a motion was carried it had no effect upon an action in a court of law. "If," he said, "you disallow Mr. Bradlaugh's vote, you thereby admit he voted."

There followed a period of pained silence on the Conservative side when they discovered into what a trap Mr. Healy in his heat had led them. Anxious groups gathered round Sir Stafford Northcote and consulted him as to the course they should take. When the question was put Lord Randolph Churchill cried "Agreed, Agreed!" But there was no time and no opportunity to get out of the difficulty, except through the division lobby. Accordingly, with Mr. Healy as their leader, the Conservative party walked out to vote on this notable proposal, Mr. Bradlaugh, with increased cheerfulness of demeanour seizing this unexpected opportunity of voting a second time. The figures showed 258 for disallowing the vote, and 161 against that course. After this the tellers in the former division were allowed to declare that 280 had voted for Sir Stafford Northcote's motion and 167 against.

Sir Stafford Northcote then moved a second resolution declaring that until Mr. Bradlaugh gave an undertaking to the Sergeant-at-Arms that he would not further disturb the proceedings of the House, he was forbidden to enter its precincts. Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone appealed to the right hon. baronet not to press his motion, a suggestion met with loud shouts of "No, No!" from the Conservatives. The motion,

on a division, was carried by 228 votes against 120. Mr. Bradlaugh, more elated than ever, went out to vote in this third division, and then passed out of the House.

Feb. 14.—*A family* The House of Commons has early begun to sit *correspondence*. late. It was three o'clock on Wednesday morning before the adjournment took place, and close upon two this morning before the Speaker went home. The occasion of this morning's sitting was the introduction of the Irish Sunday Closing Bill, with which the morning papers deal very gingerly. It was, however, a lively debate, one incident of which is worth preserving.

Mr. Blake, an Irishman of the inimitable order, who gravely distils humour without knowing it, read a family correspondence delightful in itself, but which gained infinitely from his manner of reading it, and the unctuous way in which he introduced "My dear uncle" and "My nephew." He had, he confidentially informed the House, an uncle who regularly took six tumblers of whisky toddy daily. This troubled him, and after much thought he resolved to write and remonstrate with his relative. The following was the letter:—

"My dear Uncle,—I write to say how pleased I should be if you could see your way to giving up your six glasses of whisky a day. I am sure you would find many advantages in doing so, the greatest of which would be that, as I am persuaded, it would be the means of lengthening your days."

The uncle replied:—

"My dear Nephew,—I am much obliged to you for your dutiful letter. I was so much struck by what you said, and in particular by your kind wish to lengthen my days, that last Friday I gave up the whisky. I believe you are right, my boy, as to my days being lengthened, for, bedad, it was the longest day I ever remember."

M. Clemenceau. M. Clemenceau was in the House to-night, and remained through the earlier phases of the debate. He occupied a seat under the gallery, where he was visited by Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Potter, and many other members. He has come over with the intention of studying the question of the position of the working classes, and has early placed himself in communication with Mr. Burt and Mr. Broadhurst.

Feb. 15. — Two speakers: A contrast. The House of Commons was not very full to-night whilst Dr. Lyons joined in the debate on the Address. The eminent practitioner, who gives up to Parliament much time meant for the dispensing room, had evidently made a careful diagnosis of the case of Egypt. He had, as it were, felt its pulse, and brought his stethoscope to bear upon its chest. In accordance with the honourable understanding he has established with Mr. Forster, he had for this evening secured the corner seat behind the Treasury bench. In truth, he had the whole bench to himself, and might have had many more in various parts of the House. But this one just served to hold the voluminous documents which testified to his study of this interesting "case." There were blue books, reports, copies of correspondence, and manuscript piled about the seat like notes of portentous preparation.

Dr. Lyons. But these were merely scenic accessories. They were the tools and materials with which the doctor had prepared his oration. Their mission was accomplished, and they were simply there as a sculptor, showing his finished work, might carelessly leave about his chisels and his heap of marble chips. Dr. Lyons was master of his subject, and, without faltering or hesitation, reference to notes, or glance at blue books, he went on unflagging and untiring. If *Rusticus Expectans* was in the strangers' gallery waiting till the waters of this river passed away, it is to be hoped he had brought with him his bread and cheese and jack-knife. Men came and went, slept and woke, and still Dr. Lyons went on in lively voice and with unfailing fluency. Very early in the course of the entertainment Mr. Kenny had looked in, and, seeing the good doctor on his legs, had moved a count. Why he should have done this is inexplicable, except on the ground set forth by another gentleman, not at that time an Irish member, who was asked at Donnybrook Fair why he had in passing broken a friend's skull with a blow of his shillelagh. "Why," he in reply asked, "did he stick his head outside the tint?" "Why," Mr. Kenny might have asked with equal assumption of indignation, "was Dr. Lyons on his feet when I happened to look in?" He was there, so Mr. Kenny moved the count, and by diligent exertion forty-five members were found, thus a second time saving from

collapse a debate which is understood to be watched with absorbing interest throughout the country, and which engrosses the attention of our Legislature.

This interruption avoided, Dr. Lyons went on again as smoothly and as calmly as a brook might flow after the removal of a momentary stoppage by a log caught in the osiers. It was much later than this, drawing towards the close of the first hour, when there occurred to the doctor's mind that imagery which though described in his unemotional manner, thrilled the few members who happened to be awake at the moment.

"I am not sure," he said, as the climax of his confidential account of the secret history of affairs in the East, "that a long iron hand has not been put out from Berlin to meddle in this delicate matter."

There was a something eerie in this that struck a chill to the heart of the House, as if its palpitation were stopped by physical contact with this metal instrument. An iron hand, it was instinctively felt, was scarcely suitable for the manipulation of those delicate diplomatic negotiations of which Dr. Lyons had been speaking with the off-handedness so reassuring as intimating personal acquaintance. Moreover, why the iron hand, in addition to its other vague terrors, should be longer than usual, was not clear. These attributes only added to the impressiveness of the idea conjured up. In the mind's eye one could see this terrible instrument slowly stretching out from Berlin, passing over Bohemia, resting perchance for a moment in warning gesture over Vienna, casting its long, lean shadow over the mountains and plains of Turkey, gliding like a cloud over the shuddering islands of the Archipelago, staggering Egypt with a finger touch, and awing the restless tribes of the Soudan.

Mr. John Morley. Dr. Lyons' speech was a remarkable one in its way, and might reasonably have been accepted as closing the debate. It was notable, also, in contrast with the speech by which the debate had, an hour or two earlier, been resumed. Mr. John Morley, sighing for other worlds to conquer, has made up his mind to become a force in active politics. He came to the House of Commons with the millstone of an established reputation round his neck. There is nothing

worse for a man entering the House of Commons in middle life than a reputation made elsewhere, perhaps more particularly if made in the literary world. Mr. Chamberlain is the only man in recent times whose reputation, going before him to the House of Commons, has not hopelessly weighed him down. Mr. Morley's new essay is one of unusual interest. The personal modesty which sometimes, if not always, accompanies conspicuous ability, has, in addition to other qualities, secured for him friends on both sides of the House. Few men of his uncompromising political principles have so many well-wishers and sincere admirers on the Conservative benches.

The condition of the House when he rose at five o'clock was significant of his position. Every one is sick to death of a debate which has only once flashed forth into vigour, the fire being lighted by Mr. Gladstone, and wholly consumed when he resumed his seat. No one pretends to say that anything fresh can be advanced on either side of a question on which every man in the House has made up his mind. Up to the time Mr. Gladstone spoke there was in the conflict the element of uncertainty which invests political crises with interest. But Mr. Gladstone's speech, in conjunction with the feeble attitude of the Opposition, and the growing success of General Gordon's mission, has made it plain sailing for the Ministry into the haven of an assured and, perhaps, a triumphant majority.

In these circumstances, further talk is felt to be waste of time, as was plainly testified to-night during the elaborate speeches of Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice and Mr. J. K. Cross, followed by the spasmodically lively attack of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, delivered at midnight in a sleepy House of sixty or seventy returned diners out. Yet the knowledge that Mr. Morley was to speak filled the benches, and kept them crowded throughout his address. The speech was, in respect of manner, the best he has delivered. The certain, if slowly acquired, improvement was especially marked in the last quarter of an hour, when he had warmed to his work, and, encouraged by the cheers and counter cheers, had thrown off that feeling of nervousness which falls like a blight upon some speakers.

Yet Dr. Lyons, with nothing to say, had glibly and with perfect ease talked for an hour, and but for the spectre of Mr. Kenny hanging about the doorway with threat of another

count-out, could with equal ease and increased pleasure to himself, have gone on for another hour. Mr. Morley, full of well-digested information, with trained intellect and clear-sighted mind, struggled piteously with parched tongue, nervously facing an audience in which there are not ten men his intellectual equals. But the gifts of the gods are not disposed of with that nicety of division with which Mr. Forster is enabled, at a great political crisis, to give his speech to the Opposition and his vote to Ministers. Mr. Morley will in time, as others have done, notably Sir Charles Dilke, complete his personal mastery of the House of Commons as an audience. What is to be deplored is that there is no corresponding progressive action in the other direction, and that as the common-place mind flourishes, fluency does not decay.

Feb. 18. — "A *With the issue of a new writ for West Norfolk*  
*Tory.*" a notable figure passes out of Parliamentary life, even without taking farewell of old scenes and companions. It is just forty-one years since Mr. George Bentinck—known in the House as "Big Ben," by way of separating his identity from that of his distinguished kinsman who represents Whitehaven—first presented himself for Parliamentary honours. In February, 1843, he contested Kendal unsuccessfully. Nine years later he was elected for West Norfolk, and with a brief interval, between 1868 and 1871, he has uninterruptedly sat for that county. There are old members of the House of Commons who speak of times when Mr. Bentinck was a Parliamentary force. He was wont, it is said not always without success, to stand up against Mr. Disraeli. Even to the last this early habit was strong with him, and in his annual discourse on naval affairs he impartially whipped Mr. Disraeli and whoever happened at the moment to hold the post of First Lord of the Admiralty. Sometimes Mr. Disraeli would playfully gird at him, replying with toy-pistol to his ponderous artillery. But oftener he took no notice of his declamation and denunciation, a habit into which the House of late years had also fallen.

Mr. Bentinck was proud to be a Tory. At a time when others, beating about for chance breezes, called themselves Conservatives, Liberal-Conservatives, or Constitutionalists, he boldly wrote himself down a "Tory," the only case in *Dod* where a

member so designates himself. As a Tory Mr. Bentinck during his thirty years and more of Parliamentary life has opposed every measure of progress submitted to the House. But he has always done so with a certain severe air of independence which prevented his being gracious in his support of political friends. Of the two parties in the State he preferred the Conservative. But there was a Third Party, supreme in wisdom, profound in experience, unerring in foresight, and that was Mr. George Bentinck. Of late years, whilst not unwilling when opportunity offered to decide delicate questions of foreign policy, Mr. Bentinck reserved his energies for the guardianship of the navy. Year after year, when the Navy Estimates were brought in, by whatsoever party, his massive figure was sure to be seen on the corner bench below the gangway in an attitude eagerly emulous to catch the Speaker's eye. It has been maliciously said that the speech was the same year after year, with the necessary alteration of names and figures. This fiction probably gained currency from the fact that Mr. Bentinck had one terrible question which he never failed to put with grim insistence. Whatever party was in power—whether Mr. Ward Hunt was at the Admiralty or Mr. Goschen, Mr. Childers, or Mr. W. H. Smith—Mr. Bentinck was sure to be at his post below the gangway, demanding with beetling brows and warning voice “Where are your reserves?”

Since the birth of the Fourth Party Mr. Bentinck suffered a discomfiture from which he never rallied. His favourite and familiar corner seat was, with light heart, appropriated for the leader of this important factor in Parliamentary life. For nearly thirty years he had sat there, none presuming to supersede him. Within the last three years, if he came down without having observed the precaution of securing his seat in the usual way, he found it occupied and himself regarded as an interloper. With the growth of the Fourth Party Mr. Bentinck's withdrawal from Parliamentary life began. He still came down on naval field-nights, and claimed his seat with a resoluteness that was not to be denied. Last year he was there, his bent figure supported by two lusty sticks. But though, as his sheaf of notes testified, he was prepared to speak, his opportunity did not come. The Irish members intervened, or something else happened to postpone the statement of the First Lord, and after waiting

and watching for an hour or two Mr. Bentinck rose and slowly left the House, never to return.

Now, it may well be imagined he has put to his eighty years the question “Where are your reserves—your store of strength and vigour?” and, finding the answer as unsatisfactory as has been that of a long succession of First Lords of the Admiralty, he has with his own hand severed his connection with an assembly that has known him so long. He carries with him into his retirement the respect which strong convictions honestly held and boldly expressed ever secure for a public man, and every one trusts that he may be spared for many years to watch from afar the turmoil of Parliamentary debate and the growth of the British Navy.

Feb. 19.—*Not to be gulled.* I hear from one of the actors in the scene—not, I should add, the boy over the fanlight—a funny story about the meeting at Prince’s Hall, on Saturday, convened to denounce the foreign policy of the Government. Sir Algernon Borthwick, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Sir Henry Wolff, having fought their way through the crowd in the street, came up to a door giving entrance to the hall. The door was shut, and no one in attendance outside. After vainly knocking, a small boy put his head out of the open fanlight and looked down upon them.

“Open the door,” said Sir Algernon Borthwick, imperiously, “I am the Chairman of this meeting.”

“No, you don’t,” said the small boy, and putting the thumb of his extended hand to his nose and shaking his fingers, he disappeared, leaving the three statesmen on the outside of the door.

Feb. 22.—*Three orators from Ireland.* There was a time when Mr. Sexton bade fair to be an ornament to Parliamentary debate. He has that gift of natural eloquence with which Providence has gifted Irishmen, thereby redressing the balance of fortune between the two islands. He has also logical faculty, and is not altogether destitute of humour. But within the last two years he has thrown away his chances by yielding to the fatal blight of fluency. He knows too readily when to begin, but is slow to perceive the more blessed opportunity of stopping. It is the first necessity for a successful speaker that he should

interest his audience. That attained, his next most urgent care should be to see that he does not begin to weary it. Mr. Sexton can, though painful memories are greatly weakening his power, attract the attention of an audience at the outset; but his vain repetition, his insistence on using twenty words where five would serve, his monotonous wreathing of the lip as he pours scorn upon the Saxon,adden and sicken his audience long before he has reached his "fourthly."

If he is not too self-complacent to learn, it would have been worth his while to sit out, as the Speaker did, Mr. Harrington's harangue of to-night, which lasted an hour and twenty minutes by Westminster clock. He would have seen in that chaotic mass of pointless verbiage, that more than Benjamin's mess of "thrice boiled colewort," his own faults reflected, and would have shrunk from the fate he is rapidly nearing of degenerating into a sort of first-class Harrington.

Ex-Lord Mayor  
Dawson.

Ex-Lord Mayor Dawson is not less swamped in this fatal flux of words. But then he has a humour of which Mr. Sexton is destitute. It is humour of that priceless kind which is occasionally and surprisingly stricken off like flashes of light during the movements of the muddled mind. There is something delightful in Mr. Dawson's every tone and movement. He is member for Carlow, and must needs sit in the House of Commons, and associate with common persons. But he never permits the dignity of the Lord Mayor of Dublin to suffer at his hands. His lofty gestures, his smile, at once frank and condescending, his falsetto tones, reminiscent of the heavy but well-born father on the Surrey stage, and his frequent and precise references to "the noble lord," "my right honourable friend," "the honourable and gallant gentleman," "the right honourable gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government," are fair to see and soothing to listen to.

Mr. Dawson is one of the few men in the House who give the Secretary of State for War his proper title. "The noble lord" does for ordinary people. "The noble marquess" is preferred by one who has himself worn the robes and chain of a Lord Mayor. His reference to-night to Lord Randolph Churchill is illustrative of the grandly rotund method of his speech. "The member for Woodstock" some business people

might have said, or others more careful of phrase would have alluded to "the noble lord the member for Woodstock." "The noble lord who generally sits in the place where I now stand," was Mr. Dawson's way of putting it. Not that Lord Randolph Churchill, humble and retiring as he is, habitually sits on the floor; but that any claim he might have to the notice of the House or the country was chiefly recognisable by the fact that, by accidental coincidence of neighbourhood, he had some distant connection with, or might at least be named in the same breath as Mr. Dawson. "Meself and Judge O'Brien" was another way of introducing a later portion of his speech, devoted to letting an eminent judge know his place, which even on the bench was not above, but only by courtesy equal to that of the Lord Mayor of Dublin.

But Mr. Dawson, whilst properly insistent upon his position, is not without that gracious courtesy by which great men sometimes affect, if they cannot honestly feel, a consciousness of the superiority of others. Frederick the Great used to put in his library the books of Voltaire over his own literary productions, "as a servant," he said, "should sit below his master." "One more illustrious than I" was another of Mr. Dawson's personal references. Unfortunately, when he rose to continue the ever-fresh debate on the relations of Orangemen and Nationalists in Ulster, members rose also and went out as one man, and the honourable gentleman's blood-curdling chest-notes reverberated through an almost empty chamber. There was, therefore, no one to cry "Name, name!" and so ascertain who was this exceptional personage. Through the same perversity of conduct hundreds of members lost the musical murmur of that approving reference to "the melodious melodies of Moore," and that lurid picture, painted in a dozen words, of "Ireland illumined only by the light of the pistol shots fired at Orange meetings."

Sir P. O'Brien. Mr. Dawson, happily, we have often with us.

Sir Patrick O'Brien is an orator of rarer appearance. Every one is sorry to know that a gentleman who has been an ornament of the House for nearly thirty-two years has been obliged to limit his attendance on Parliamentary duties owing to ill-health. There was no sign of failing vigour, either

of mind or body, when to-night Sir Patrick rose to offer a few words on the state of Ireland and his own personal relations with the Government of the day. Some one, it would appear, has been accusing him of being a Government hack. This is probably only one of those ways they have in Ireland of expressing a difference of political opinion. But the unfounded and ridiculous assertion had rankled in the sensitive mind of Sir Patrick, and he determined, once for all, to meet it. A Parliamentary orator of long experience, endowed with his full share of the national gift of eloquence, Sir Patrick had evidently regarded the occasion as one that demanded unusual preparation. He had spent some hours in his study, arranging his arguments, preparing his illustrations, and possibly here and there rounding off a sentence.

The deliberateness of the preparation was otherwise testified to by the unusual circumstance that he had provided himself with a text. This, though new in the House of Commons, is not without precedent in Parliamentary debate. Sir Patrick, whose mind is stored with knowledge and recollections of contemporary and recent history, will know that on one occasion Mr. Grattan preached a speech in the Irish House of Commons from a text. To that extent Sir Patrick may by persons of Mr. Biggar's envious temperament be charged with plagiarism. But the inherent originality of the man was testified to in a striking manner. Having in due fashion deliberately read out his text to the wondering House of Commons, Sir Patrick never more alluded to it.

This may have been accident or design. With so finished a speaker it was probably the latter. With an audience sated with much speaking there is a tendency to permit the attention to wander from individual speeches. Members may listen to the first few sentences, or even half-way through a speech. Then they begin to yawn, to enter into private conversation, or sometimes to leave the House. But Sir Patrick had by an adroit manœuvre secured their attention up to the last. Members had the text fixed in their memory. What was the orator going to do with it? It was evidently capable of four divisions—Air, Food, Order, and Liberty. Here were illimitable possibilities. How would the text be applied? Where would the reference come in? It was striking to watch the eager rows of senators all with their faces turned towards the orator as with one hand

elegantly disposed in his trouser pocket he with the other waved defiance at the cowering group of Irish members below the gangway opposite, whence had doubtless gone forward the opprobrious and ridiculous accusation touching the Government hack.

They watched and waited to the end, but the text never more appeared. Like ships posted up at Lloyd's, it had set out with a fair wind and a smooth sea on a voyage that promised to be long and prosperous, and "had not since been heard of." Presently the carefully prepared notes shared the same fate. Sir Patrick sheered off from them early in his address. Once or twice he paused to look at them, but finding that they had nothing whatever to do with what he had been saying last, he finally flung them on the seat behind, and, both hands thus relieved, he thrust them in his pockets, and with speech that never faltered, arrived at an unexpected conclusion.

Some men find it difficult once a Session to conceive a speech worthy of the House of Commons. Sir Patrick O'Brien prepares one, and in the very fulness of a well-stored mind, and out of the overflowing richness of his vocabulary, he flings away his prepared oration, text and all, and delights the listening Senate with an impromptu speech, which of itself, from the variety of its topics, might have been subdivided into twenty for the use of ordinary men.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE OLD SPEAKER AND THE NEW.

The Retirement of the Speaker—The Election of Speaker—Official Record—  
The Queen approves the Election of Speaker.

Feb. 25.—The re-  
tirement of the  
Speaker.

The House of Commons was crowded in every part when this evening Mr. Gladstone rose to move a vote of thanks to the Speaker on his retirement from the Chair, after twelve years of distinguished service, The peers filled their allotted space in the gallery over the clock, completing the crowd in this part of the House. The Prime

Minister, who on rising was loudly cheered, said the first of the motions he had to propose conveyed to the Speaker the thanks of the House for his service in the Chair. With respect to that motion he declared his conviction that it proceeded direct from the heart as well as the understanding of the House of Commons, a statement approved by general cheering. He dwelt upon the peculiar difficulties which had environed the term of Sir Henry Brand's office, observing that its duties had been performed in a period of difficulty unknown in prior experience. Having sat under five Speakers, Mr. Gladstone testified that the duties of the Speaker, always arduous, had risen during the tenancy of the right hon. gentleman, both in gravity and difficulty, beyond what any of his predecessors had had to contend with. Probably but for the Speaker's skill and tact, his courage and firmness, those difficulties would have been graver still. Whilst the House looked back with gratitude to the services rendered by the Speaker they looked forward with warm desire to the opportunity provided him of many years of public service, and with the hope that the valuable life so freely given to the service of the House and the nation would be greatly lengthened by a diminution of its cares.

Sir Stafford Northcote observed that after the eloquent words to which the House had just listened, and knowing how faithfully those words represented the feeling of the great body of the House, he felt it was hardly necessary for him to add anything in support of the motion of the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, he, in a few words evidently inspired by genuine feeling, expressed on the part of those who sat on his side of the House their entire concurrence in the sentiments expressed by Mr. Gladstone.

Sir Stafford Northcote resumed his seat amid much cheering, and Mr. Parnell rose. Personally, the hon. member for Cork said, he extremely regretted that it had not fallen to his lot to acquiesce in the resolution which had been submitted. But, whilst acknowledging the great courtesy, kindness, and consideration which the Speaker had always displayed towards himself and his friends, he felt bound to remember that certain of his official actions had aided in producing grievous misfortune and wrong to Ireland. Whilst he proposed to say "No" to the question, it was not intended to disturb the harmony of the

House, by taking a division, a conclusion which drew forth some cries of "Hear, hear!" With this exception, Mr. Parnell was listened to in profound silence. He spoke with evident difficulty, though he had observed the precaution of writing down his brief speech. As soon as he had finished he left the House accompanied by the larger number of the gentlemen who habitually follow his leadership.

The question was about to be put when Lord Henry Lennox unexpectedly presented himself from the neighbourhood of the Parnellites, and "as a member of thirty-eight years' standing" asked the Speaker to forget the amiable and eccentric criticisms which had just been uttered. There was some inclination to resent the noble lord's interposition as superfluous. When he was followed by Mr. Newdegate there were loud cries of impatience. Through these the voice of Mr. Newdegate was heard solemnly announcing that he had been in the House for forty years. Attempting to go back to the historic morning when the Speaker had closed a protracted debate by the Irish members, murmurs rose again, and Mr. Newdegate, with a great sigh, sat down. Mr. Gregory followed. Then the Speaker put the resolution conveying the vote of thanks. It was received with a loud shout of "Aye," Mr. Biggar, Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. Harrington joining in the cry of "No." But this opposition was not persisted in, and amid renewed cheering the resolution was carried.

The Speaker rising to acknowledge the vote, there were cries of "Hats off!" and all the members uncovered save one. This was Mr. O'Brien, who, with his hat on his head and his arm thrown over the back of the bench, sat alone even among Irish members in this last mark of incivility to the Speaker. The Speaker, after a dignified reference to the remarks of Mr. Parnell and Mr. O'Donnell, expressed his thanks to the House for the honour they had done him. The rest of his life, he said, would be cheered by pleasant memories connected with the House of Commons, and among them the scene then passing before him would ever hold a place. He was unwilling to say farewell, because his heart would always be in the House of Commons. He concluded by thanking the permanent officers, more especially Sir Erskine May, for the assistance rendered to him in the Chair.

Mr. Gladstone, in accordance with usage, moved a quaint resolution, "thanking Mr. Speaker for what he had said," and directing that his reply should be entered on the Orders of the House. This was agreed to, as was also the resolution praying the Queen to confer a mark of royal favour upon the Speaker, and the House forthwith set itself to the ordinary business of the sitting.

Feb. 26.—<sup>The election of</sup> The House of Commons had a curiously unfurnished look at four o'clock this afternoon. Speaker.

Every bench was crowded on both sides of the House, the galleries over the clock having their full complement of strangers, both noble and commoner. Prominent on the row of benches on a level with the peers sat Sir Robert Peel. But the mace was absent from the table, and the Chair was empty. Members had come down unusually early, albeit the daily attraction of prayers was lacking. Sir Erskine May occupied his usual seat at the table with his two colleagues on the left.

Immediately after four o'clock had struck Mr. Gladstone rose and informed the House of the gracious permission of the Queen that they should proceed to the choice of a new Speaker. At the same moment the Sergeant-at-Arms advanced, bearing the mace extended on his arms, and placed it on the hooks before the table. Sir Erskine May then pointed without remark to Mr. Whitbread, who sat in the seat usually filled by Mr. Forster. Immediately behind him, in the seat appropriated by Mr. Goschen, was Mr. Rathbone, and on his left Mr. Arthur Peel. Mr. Whitbread, on rising, was received with cheers. After sketching the duties of the Speaker, with special reference to the increased difficulties surrounding them in modern times, he referred to the new candidate for the Chair, of whom he remarked, amid cheers from the Liberal benches, that, though he had never thrust himself on the attention of the House, he enjoyed its respect, whilst those who had come nearest to him had the fullest confidence that he would show himself a worthy inheritor of a proud Parliamentary name. He concluded a speech that occupied a little over ten minutes in the delivery by moving that "Mr. Arthur Peel take the Chair of this House as Speaker." Mr. Rathbone seconded the motion.

No question was put, Mr. Arthur Peel immediately rising, amid cheers from the Liberals, feebly echoed from the other side. After a cordial reference to the speeches of the mover and seconder, he observed that he was under no delusions as to the reasons for the preference which had fallen upon him. There were men on both sides who would have better filled the Chair. He knew how much he was indebted to the fact that he was the son of a man whose public services were written on the record of the House, and whose name was cherished in multitudes of British homes. This modest and graceful reference to his father elicited the first cheer in which both sides of the House heartily joined, a demonstration which became more familiar during the remainder of the few sentences which composed Mr. Peel's speech. Acknowledging this inherited recommendation he felt all the more the weight of the responsibility that attached to him. He knew also that he had a great example before him in the gentleman who had just left the Chair. If elected he would humbly and honestly try to do his duty, acting up to the example of his predecessors. To the moral support and assistance of the House he looked for power to deal with the difficulties that faced him. He would not make any professions which would be so soon tested by experience; but he knew that it was his duty and it would be his aim to lay aside all that was personal and all that savoured of political feeling, subordinating everything to the great interests of the House. Hoping to be able to carry on unimpaired the traditions of the Chair he sat down "humbly submitting himself to the pleasure of the House."

This speech, delivered in a clear, firm voice, spoken with evident feeling, and inspired by high principle, evidently made a favourable impression upon the House. The Opposition, who had somewhat coldly received the Speaker-elect when he rose, heartily cheered him when he resumed his seat. Mr. Whitbread then advanced, and, taking Mr. Peel by the hand, led him forth to the floor of the House. Preceded by his proposer, and followed by his seconder, Mr. Peel, amid general cheering, advanced to the Chair. Standing on the steps, he had got so far as the declaration "I am deeply sensible"—when Mr. O'Donnell interposed, and observed, "I rose to address Sir

Erskine May." There were loud murmurs at this interruption, amid which Mr. O'Donnell resumed his seat; and the Speaker, without noticing the interruption, and quietly taking up his sentence, proceeded to declare his deep sense of the great and unexpected honour done him by the House in calling him to the chair—an assumption of unanimity at which there came from the benches where the Parnellites sit some murmur of dissent. He could only say that the best services he could offer would be at the disposal of the House, and he prayed for its generous support.

The Speaker then took the Chair, and the Sergeant-at-Arms, approaching with the accustomed obeisance, placed the mace on the table.

Mr. Gladstone said he believed he expressed the general sense of the House in tendering to the new Speaker his congratulations. He might, he thought, add without impertinence, that to him it afforded no common gratification to assist at the elevation of a man whose name the Speaker bore, the son of one for whom he retained an unbroken and undiminished veneration. Sir Stafford Northcote echoed and cordially adopted the sentiments and opinions expressed by the Prime Minister of the Speaker's high personal qualifications and his claims upon the esteem of the House, a feeling for which, he added amidst loud cheers, additional reasons were found in the eloquent and powerful address which the Speaker had made. It would ill become him to anticipate the action of future Parliaments, but as long as the Speaker occupied the Chair he would receive from all members of the House a full, entire, and undivided support. Mr. O'Donnell rising again, the House began to empty. His intention, however, was not other than to add his congratulations to those already expressed, and, trusting that the Speaker would retain the ancient traditions of the Chair in protecting the rights of minorities, he begged to remain his most obedient subject. Mr. Gladstone moved the adjournment of the House, which took place at ten minutes to five, the whole proceedings having thus been completed within the hour. Members from both sides pressed round the Chair, to shake hands with the new Speaker, and offer him their personal congratulations.

Official record. The following are the quaint terms in which note of the proceedings is made in the Official Record of business :—

THE Serjeant came, and brought the Mace, and laid it under the Table.

Then the Right honourable William Ewart Gladstone, addressing himself to the Clerk, who (standing up pointed to him, and then sat down) acquainted the House that Her Majesty having been informed of the resignation of the Right honourable Sir Henry Bouvierie William Brand, G.C.B., late Speaker of this House, gives leave to the House to proceed forthwith to the choice of a new Speaker.

Then Mr. Whitbread stood up, and addressing himself in like manner to the Clerk, proposed to the House for their Speaker Mr. Arthur Wellesley Peel, and moved "That Arthur Wellesley Peel, esquire, do take the Chair of this House, as Speaker," in which Motion he was seconded by Mr. Rathbone :—

Whereupon Mr. Arthur Wellesley Peel, being unanimously called to the Chair, submitted himself to the House, and he was again called to the Chair, where, standing on the upper step, he expressed the sense he had of the great honour the House had been pleased to confer upon him,—and thereupon he sat down in the Chair; and the Mace was laid upon the Table.

Then Mr. Gladstone, having congratulated Mr. Speaker Elect, signified the pleasure of Her Majesty, that the House should present their Speaker To-morrow, at Two of the clock, in the House of Peers, for Her Majesty's Royal Approbation; Sir Stafford Northcote also congratulated Mr. Speaker Elect.

Mr. Gladstone then moved, "That the House do now adjourn until To-morrow, at Two of the clock."

Mr. Speaker Elect put the Question, which, being agreed to, the House was adjourned accordingly, and Mr. Speaker Elect went away without the Mace before him.

Feb. 27. — The Queen approves the election of Speaker. The House of Lords met at two o'clock to-day for the purpose of going through the ceremony of presenting to the newly elected Speaker an assurance of the Queen's approval of the Commons' choice. Clad in scarlet robes, the Lord Chancellor, with Lord Carlingford, Earl Sydney, Lord Monson, and the Earl of Kenmare, occupied the seat before the woolsack which is used at the opening of Parliament and when the Royal assent is given to Bills. An archbishop, two bishops, and about twenty peers were scattered over the benches. Among others present was Lord Eversley, who looked on whilst his second successor in the Chair was introduced to the Lords. In the meanwhile the House of Commons had assembled, the Speaker Elect taking the Chair a few minutes after two

o'clock. He was at this stage wearing Court dress and a Bar wig.

At ten minutes past two Black Rod arrived with a summons to the other House. The Speaker Elect marched down the floor of the House, preceded by the Sergeant-at-Arms carrying the mace, and accompanied by a considerable number of members, amongst whom were the Prime Minister and Mr. Childers. On appearing at the Bar of the House of Lords he informed their lordships that the choice of the faithful Commons in the election of a Speaker had fallen upon him, and humbly submitted himself for her Majesty's gracious approval. The commission having been read, the Lord Chancellor, addressing the Speaker Elect as "Mr. Peel," said they had it in command from her Majesty to declare her entire confidence in his talents, diligence, and efficiency to fulfil the important duties of the high office to which he had been called. He declared her Majesty's "Royal allowance and confirmation of you, Sir, as Speaker of the House of Commons." The Speaker submitted himself in all humility to her Majesty's Royal will and pleasure, entreating that if inadvertently he fell into error blame might be imputed to him and not to her Majesty's faithful Commons. This said, the Speaker retired, and the House of Lords promptly adjourned.

On returning to the House of Commons, the Speaker, standing on the steps of the Chair, informed the House of the Royal confirmation of their election, and repeated his assurance that whatever energies he might possess would be placed at the entire disposal of the House, and that he would to the best of his powers consult its rights and its interests. Members stood uncovered during this brief address. At its conclusion the Speaker withdrew, and returned in a few moments arrayed in the Speaker's robe and wearing a full-bottomed wig. The House thereupon proceeded to business.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### MINISTERS AND QUESTIONS.

"Those D——d Ducks"—Answering Questions—Lord Hartington—Mr. Dodson—Mr. Gladstone—A Student in the Disraelian School—Mr. Finch Hatton—A Lunatic in the Speaker's Gallery—Sir R. Cross defends the Bishops—Visit from an Old Friend—New Members—Sir R. Cross's Escapade—Mr. Newdegate's Confession—A Political Economist—A Flux of Honours—Bulls—After the Levée.

Feb. 28.—"Those Mr. Bright has during the recent political crisis d——d ducks." on the Egyptian Question preserved an attitude distinct alike from that of Mr. Forster or Mr. Goschen. He has neither attacked his old colleagues with ancient vigour, nor has he supported them whilst dexterously showing that their policy is not perfect. But his views on affairs in Egypt are well known, and are sometimes indicated in private conversation. A capital story illustrating this condition of mind is just now delighting the House of Commons, though I believe Mr. Gladstone did not smile when it was related in his hearing. The position of the Ministry in respect of Egypt was under discussion over a friendly cigar.

"There's something in it," said Mr. Bright, "that reminds me of a case that happened at the Quarter Sessions in Somersetshire. A man was charged with stealing a pair of ducks. The evidence was undeniable. The jury found him guilty. 'Have you anything to say, prisoner?' the Chairman asked. 'Yes, sir,' said the man, 'I have to say I wish to goodness I'd never seen those d——d ducks.' Thus, Gladstone doubtless wishes he had never gone to Egypt."

Apr. 30.—Answer—In the dire necessity of somehow saving time in ing questions. the House of Commons, Mr. Trevelyan's experiment, tried to-night, is worth consideration. During the cannonade of questioning from the Irish members discussing the supplementary estimates, the Chief Secretary remaining seated, and turning over the papers on his knee, proceeded to answer, and had got half way through his reply before indignant shouts

of "Order!" from the Irish camp, supplemented by vigorous tapping on the back by Mr. Childers, called his attention to the little irregularity. Perhaps this bold innovation had better be tried in the first instance with parties less exacting on the matter of order than are the Irish members. But it is at least worth trying. There is no commoner phrase with members struggling through an imperfect speech and nearing the happy end than that by which they declare, "I will sit down by saying"—and then they will repeat in a phrase what they have cruelly attenuated in a speech. If it is permissible for members to "sit down by saying," why should they not sometimes say whilst sitting down?

**Lord Hartington.** With Lord Hartington, for example, an appreciable saving in a Session would be attained if he were privileged to reply to questions in his favourite attitude, on the Treasury bench, with one hand in his pocket, legs crossed, and hat well planted on his thoughtful brow. On Thursday night, when Lord Randolph Churchill hit upon the curious telegraphic or reporter's blunder in his Accrington speech, Lord Hartington was up like a shot, and appeared with such suddenness at the table that Lord Randolph was so taken by surprise that contrary to his usual custom, he yielded the floor to an interrupting speaker. But that is an exception to the noble lord's manner. Usually he takes a moment to consider whether, on the whole, it is worth while to get up. Ministerial responsibility weighing upon him, he withdraws a hand from his pocket, slowly unlaces his legs, pauses to reconsider the matter, finally decides to do it, and languidly bears down upon the table. Here are so many seconds lost, and in a busy Session, with railway stations flying in the air all around us, as Lord Randolph has graphically pictured the situation, and Mr. Warton complaining of waste of time on Wednesdays, half a minute a day counts, and the aggregate in a Session runs up to hours.

**Mr. Dodson.** Mr. Dodson is another Minister with whom, in more ways than one, desirable economy would be effected if the new rule, essayed with characteristic originality by Mr. Trevelyan, were approved by the House. Mr. Dodson's attitude towards a member who asks him a question is very singular. His primary assumption is that some evil purpose

lurks behind, what may appear on the face of it an innocent query. The questioner is a man to be put down in the severest magisterial manner. Accordingly, whilst the member timidly puts the question—for some Sessions it has been as to the prospects of the Prevention of Floods Bill—the Chancellor of the Duchy sits bolt upright, with an added stoniness of regard on his expressive features. The question concluded, he resolutely approaches the table and dashes down his hat in the middle of it, out of arm's reach, so that he may have free play. The gesture is something akin to that with which a gentleman about to engage in a street fight takes off his coat, rolls it up, and throws it on the ground. Then, in hard voice, with a tinge of righteous anger and just indignation in it, Mr. Dodson answers the unoffending questioner. This done, he pauses a moment, looks round as if inquiring whether the interlocutor "wants any more," and then, taking up from the table the gage of battle, truculently places it on his head, and returns to his seat. It is sometimes interesting to speculate on a week with Mr. Dodson and the Irish members, supposing the right hon. gentleman were Chief Secretary. He would certainly want a new hat at the end of a fortnight.

Mr. Gladstone. With Mr. Gladstone the House has a convenient opportunity of judging of the working of both systems—the one established by usage, and the other suggested by Mr. Trevelyan. Here the advantages of the latter are triumphantly asserted. Rising in due form to reply to an interpellation, the Premier rarely sits down without having made a speech. The less the degree of information he desires to communicate, the more numerous are his words. Sir Charles Dilke, whilst Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, frequently answered a long interrogation by "Yes, sir!" or "No, sir!" Occasionally, yielding to the fashion of prolixity prevalent on the Treasury bench, he has been known to extend this into the formula, "The reply to the hon. gentleman's question is in the affirmative;" but that was a rare weakness. Mr. Gladstone would have made of the same opportunity a little speech that would have occupied a quarter of a column of the morning papers, and when he sat down the hon. member would have been in doubt as to whether the answer was in the affirmative or the negative.

No one can be clearer in statement than the Prime Minister, as witness his marvellous exposition of the Reform Bill on Thursday night; and no one can be obscure, as witness his mystifying replies during the first two weeks of the Session to all questions relating to policy in Egypt. When he interjects replies whilst seated, it is obviously impossible for him to move through the inevitable three courses by which the affluent river of his speech is accustomed to flow. Accordingly he gives an answer instead of making a speech, and public business moves forward with a step lightened by so much.

The instalment of sorely needed reform suggested by Mr. Trevelyan is the better worth fighting for because it might ultimately lead to the complete measure which, though exceedingly simple, would be more effective than any hitherto attempted in the way of saving public time. If Ministers were allowed to answer questions seated in the House, the time would not be far distant when they might answer them seated in their office. The British Parliament is the only one in the world where the freshest and most valuable hour of the sitting is taken up with cross-examination of Ministers. Of course questions of real importance occasionally appear amidst the multitude; but they stand in the proportion of the pennyworth of bread to the intolerable quantity of sack. The other night, of fifty-two questions placed upon the paper, twenty-seven stood in the name of Irish members, and eight were submitted by Mr. Biggar. Last night, with the House crowded in every part awaiting the exposition of the Reform Bill, it was a quarter past six before questions were disposed of.

Mar. 6.—A student in the Disraelian school.

Mr. Finch Hatton made a remarkable maiden speech to-night in the interminable debate on Egyptian affairs. This sudden and unexpected interposition of an unfamiliar face and figure was

as welcome as the discovery of a bunch of violets would be to the sojourner in the arid desert. All night long the course of speech had flowed, like Mr. Robert Montgomery's famous river, "meandering level with its fount," which, in this instance, was Colonel Stanley, whom Mr. Gladstone, possibly by way of delicately hinting that his style of oratory was better suited for another place, persisted in calling "the noble lord." At one

time the almost stagnant stream threatened absolutely to stop. Only five members of the party understood to be dying with patriotic desire to discuss the affairs of Egypt were scattered over the benches. Fortunately one was Mr. Kennard, who had possessed himself of a copy of the most recent issue of Egyptian papers. Mr. Kennard, appealed to to save the State, frankly admitted he was not prepared with a speech, but he would read a few extracts ; and this he did, breaking out into impromptu speech only when the Chairman conversed with him on the general convenience of his procedure. With the assistance of a pair of interrogatory eye-glasses, and by solemnly repeating particular assertions of Lord Granville, and asking the four gentlemen on the benches opposite "What did *that* mean?" Mr. Kennard creditably occupied half an hour.

Mr. Finch Hatton. It was later in the sitting that Mr. Finch Hatton presented himself. Honourable gentlemen, recovered from fatigues of dinner, had begun to assemble in considerable numbers. From the very first Mr. Hatton attracted attention. There is something in his appearance altogether distinct from the ordinary member of Parliament. The straightly brushed black hair; the deadly pale face, telling of hours improved whilst the midnight oil wasted; the attitude, with the left elbow squared, and the hand, rigidly extended, lightly pressing his back, whilst the right hand, also set according to approved pattern, coyly hid the tips of his fingers within the breast of a closely buttoned frock-coat—each and all spoke eloquently of the carefully trained, laboriously cultured debater, accustomed to revive for the Union Debating Club the glories of Cicero or Demosthenes. Occasionally, as he spoke, Mr. Finch Hatton—how suggestive is the very name of the Coningsby set!—withdrawing the tips of his fingers from the shelter of his bosom, stiffly waved his hand, but quickly returned it to its nest, as if the whole machinery would break down if this part were disarranged. Always the left hand rested at the back, and always there was the same prim deferential bending of the body towards the audience, and the clock-work movement of the head from right to left, varied at due interval by a raising of the eyes towards the gaslit ceiling.

The speech was a good one, rather for what it promised

than for actual performance. Mr. Finch Hatton is evidently a student in the oratorical school of Mr. Disraeli as tempered by the mannerisms of the Union. He turned out some glittering antithetical sentences, which lost nothing by delivery in a clear ringing voice. If he had limited his speech to ten minutes it would have been a success. But he had too many plums for the size of his pudding, and could not be induced to spare the company a single one. For a quarter of an hour he was listened to with that generous appreciation the House of Commons, apart from politics, gladly bestows upon young aspirants; but when, soaring to higher flights, he invited the House to visit Mr. Gladstone on his "uneasy couch," and watch him, moaning and tossing about as the long procession of his pallid victims passed before him, a shout of hearty laughter disconcerted even Mr. Finch Hatton. It is only the genius of Shakespeare, expressed by one or two great tragedians, that can invest with due solemnity the scene in Richard's tent on the eve of Bosworth Field. To ask the House to realise its application to a statesman known, among other distinctions, as the soundest sleeper of his age, was too funny both for the kindly intention and the good manners of the House.

Having once broken into laughter, the House gave itself up to merriment, and when the tips of Mr. Finch Hatton's fingers made one of their periodical visitations into the air, and were pointed towards the Premier as he exclaimed, "I summon Achilles from his tent," there was another inextinguishable roar, in which Achilles himself heartily joined. But Mr. Finch Hatton will doubtless comfort himself with the recollection, dear to others who have lived before him, that Mr. Disraeli's maiden speech in the House of Commons was also laughed at. No one would have been in the least surprised if the new member, once more perilling his finger tips by contact with the rude air, had exclaimed, "You laugh now, but the time will come when you *shall* hear me." On the whole, Mr. Finch Hatton had no grounds for complaint of the reception of his maiden speech. With the advantage of practice he will discard his stilts, cut out all the passages he has most admired when preparing his speech, and will become a valued acquisition to a side of the House where poverty of good speech-making seems every year to grow greater.

Mar. 20.—A lunatic in the Speaker's gallery.

The House was enlivened to-night by the visit of a gentleman delicately described as "of maniacal tendencies." When he saw Sir Wilfrid Lawson rise from the Liberal side and make an opening for the Conservatives to waste two hours of the sitting and worry the Government, he probably came to the conclusion that he was not the only madman on the premises. However it be, he broke out whilst Lord Randolph Churchill was addressing the House. Lord Randolph was in one of those oratorical moods which, as a rule, he happily reserves for the public platform. He shouted at the top of his voice. He smote the open palm of his left hand with his right fist clenched. He threw his arms up over his head in final despairing disgust with this worst of all Governments, and, to the intense delight of the Radicals immediately opposite, he introduced a new oratorical gesture, buttoning and unbuttoning his coat, as if, like Mr. Parnell in view of the Land Bill, he was half inclined to take it off.

The gentleman of maniacal tendencies, having had what was left of his mind unusually exercised by contemplation of Sir Wilfrid Lawson's vagaries, became dangerously excited as he watched Lord Randolph. When the noble lord threw up his arms, as a signalman warns an approaching train of danger ahead, the lunatic, to the profound astonishment of persons near him, began to do the same. At last, when Lord Randolph had managed to draw Mr. Gladstone into personal altercation, the "gentleman of maniacal tendencies" could stand it no longer. Leaping up and throwing up his arms, always in ludicrous imitation of Lord Randolph, he shouted out some inarticulate phrase, and was forthwith expelled.

Mar. 21.—Sir R. Cross defends the bishops.

The bishops are fortunate in finding in the hour of peril a defender in the House of Commons like Sir Richard Cross. Without being able quite clearly to define it, there is a feeling in the human mind that a bishop, and above all twenty-six bishops, should, if an advocate be needed, have one something out of the ordinary way. It appeared for nearly two hours to-night that they were not to have any at all. Four members had spoken from the Liberal benches before any one rose from the Conservative side. It is true Sir William Harcourt, interposing immediately after

Mr. Agnew had seconded the motion in a speech that was a model of brevity and good sense, declared himself against the motion to close the door of the House of Lords upon the bishops. But the Home Secretary's speech was a very curious one, and if the bishops had happened to be sitting in the peers' gallery they might have felt an uncomfortable sense that the right hon. gentleman, whilst ostensibly pleading their cause, was really chaffing them.

The debate was far advanced when Sir Richard Cross appeared. He, too, as his dress denoted, had been dining. When he approached the table it was at once seen that he was especially impressed with the solemnity of his mission as champion of the episcopal bench. Always severe, even magisterial in manner, when dealing with arguments put forward by Radicals, he was to-night preternaturally impressive. He had unearthed a declaration on the subject under discussion made by Mr. Gladstone in 1870, and this, written out on a piece of paper, he, by way of prefacing his speech, waved authoritatively towards the crowded benches where the Radicals sat exultant in the misplaced confidence of coming victory.

That gesture, perhaps a little obscure in meaning as it stood without explanation, had something to do with the remarkable scene that followed. Members opposite tittered. Sir R. Cross, whose objection to laughter is deeply rooted, and has often been proclaimed, looked up from the notes he was beginning to consider, and through his spectacles regarded the throng with a severe glance that should have cowed them, but only made the titter grow into a ripple of laughter. Haughtily disregarding this, he proceeded, after his familiar oratorical manner, to spit gentlemen opposite on the horns of dilemma. Either it was this or it was that, both hopeless cases. "No, no!" cried the Radicals.

"No, no?" echoed Sir Richard, with another withering glance, "but I say it is true;" at which there was more rude laughter.

The climax was reached when the quotation from Mr. Gladstone's speech of 1870 began to be approached. This was a bombshell with which the camp opposite was to be blown into the air after it had been judiciously potted with the rifle shot of close argument. Sir R. Cross was in no hurry

to bring about the catastrophe. He played with the Radicals as a cat does with a mouse. "What did the Prime Minister say in 1870?" he asked, with another scathing glance across the floor. This reminded him that the Prime Minister was not present, and he glided off into regrets at his absence, which led him into other topics. But if he pulled up five hundred miles off, he always came back to his quotation. Once, when the excursion was unusually prolonged, some impatient member cried "Divide!"

"No, no!" said Sir Richard, with a confidential little nod to the Speaker; "we're not going to divide for a long time yet," at which the House shook with laughter.

Members began to watch for a recurrence of the inevitable reference, and as soon as Sir Richard, pulling himself up, came back to "the Prime Minister," there was a roar of laughter. Sir Richard could not make it out at all. Why should they laugh when he cited "the Prime Minister"? Had they, he asked, so little respect for the opinions of the Prime Minister? The more they laughed the more obstinately he, with increasing severity in tone and look, pursued the inquiry, till members rolled about the seats in paroxysms of laughter, and men who were never known to smile laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks. After battling for half an hour with this strange humour, Sir Richard Cross sat down, and pondered over what it might mean. But he had saved the episcopal bench, and in a House of 285 members a majority of 11 declared themselves on the side of the bishops.

Mar. 24.—Visit from an old friend. To-night Viscount Hampden, for the first time in his life sat in the peers' gallery, and regarded the familiar scene below from a new point of view. His lordship was delightful to look upon as he sat over the clock with rosy smiling face and an air of determined jollity. There is perhaps no human being for whom an occasional visit to the House of Commons is fraught with so much active pleasure as to our youngest viscount. For years he has been accustomed to sit in the Chair, wigged and gowned, with elbows squared and legs primly disposed on footstool, his face set in expression of immovable gravity, his mind strained in attention upon the scene passing before him, and an uncomfortable feeling that at

any moment he may be called upon to establish a precedent for the guidance of the most critical and important assembly in the world. After this, to come into the gallery in dinner dress, to throw his arm negligently over the back of the bench, to cross his legs in jaunty fashion, to listen to Sir William Harcourt's private jokes, and to laugh with unrestrained mirth, was worth as much as the addition of strawberry leaves to the pearls on his coronet.

With what altered feelings he could look around the House ! What to him now was the quarter where the Irish members sat ? Mr. O'Donnell's eye-glass had lost its terrors, and the figure of Mr. Biggar rising, and with outstretched hand signalling the Chair, as if it were a City omnibus, no longer introduced in his breast feelings premonitory of nightmare. Possibly there lurked in his mind some hope of a scene arising. Even an ex-Speaker of the House of Commons is human, and to see Lord Randolph Churchill wrangling with the new Speaker, to watch Mr. Healy skating over the thin ice of peremptory suspension, would have been pleasant and conducive to digestion. Lord Hampden had to be content with something less than these extreme luxuries. The House was in a decidedly hilarious state, but there was nothing like disorder. So he sat in the gallery, beaming and joyous, having the place all to himself save for occasional visitors from below.

Mar. 25. — New members. Three new members took their seats, Mr. Thornhill in place of the late Speaker, Mr. Redmond for an Irish constituency, and Sir R. Peel for Huntingdon. Sir R. Peel was, of course, the hero of the occasion. It was pretty to see Sir Erskine May introduce him to his brother, the Speaker, with as much formality as if they had never met. Mr. Thornhill is a quiet looking gentleman, who does not seem likely to set the Cambridge Fens on fire.

Mr. Redmond the younger is a person with whom the House is likely to have trouble. He swaggered up the floor with the indescribable air of an ill-bred man attempting to be perfectly at his ease, and not quite knowing what to do with his hands. Having signed the roll, he threw the pen down with a lofty air and haughtily held the Speaker at arms length, when the right hon. gentleman extended his hand with the customary greeting.

Evidently he is not to be bought by social bribes, and he desired to take an early opportunity of letting the Speaker and the House know it.

Sir R. Cross's escapade. The joke of the evening is Mr. Talbot's remark on Sir Richard Cross's performance of Friday on the motion to abolish the bishops in the House of Lords. In order to appreciate it, it should be understood that Mr. Talbot is a man of the solemn aspect, and even a more devoted son of the Church than Mr. Beresford Hope, one to whom a bishop is a sacred personage.

“ Shocking ! ” he moaned when some one referred to the incident, “ *and on such a solemn occasion.* ”

Mar. 27. — Mr. Newdegate's confession. No important debate in the House of Commons would be complete without the appearance at the top corner bench below the gangway on the Conservative side of a familiar figure pressing a solemn interrogation. “ I belong to the stupid party, ” said Mr. Newdegate, just before the division this morning. There was an infinite pathos in the tones of his voice, and a touching dejection in his manner. It was as if a man had struggled for years against the growing conviction, and finally, finding it irresistible, had decided that it was no use any longer trying to hide the truth from himself or others. Encouraged by the assenting cheers with which this frank statement was received, he went on to say, still harping on the one melancholy string, “ I am not intelligent, ” at which there was a renewed burst of cheering.

Thus sustained Mr. Newdegate proceeded to catechise Her Majesty’s Government. It seemed that commerce and agriculture, as well as Newdegate, are depressed, and the hon. member for North Warwickshire insisted upon knowing whether the Government were aware of that fact. It is one peculiarity of Mr. Newdegate’s cross-examination that he never expects a reply, a convenient frame of mind seeing that at the time he habitually interposes Ministers have already spoken, and the House is clamorous for a division. Having made his confession and put his questions, he now resumed his seat with blood-red pocket-handkerchief clasped in his hand, which rested upon his knee, as, with his hat distinctly cocked on one side, he surveyed the House with benevolent visage.

Apr. 4.—A political economist. Sir Baldwyn Leighton is a gentleman of whom any legislative assembly might well be proud. Young in years, he is older in wisdom than Mr. Gregory, who recently took the prize at the competition of members who had been longest in the House, and who on that ground claimed the right to offer their felicitations to the newly elected Speaker. To look at him is a liberal education. Statistics are his *forte*, omniscience his foible. His black hair brushed back from pallid brow suggests the poet; but local taxation is written in the firm lines about his mouth, and terminable annuities sparkle in his eye. His speech is, perhaps, a little incoherent, owing to the immense pressure of thought, which projects miscellaneous information without that orderly arrangement that is a necessity to the more commonplace mind. But his gestures are superb, as with his figure drawn up to its full height, his right hand clenched, all but the accusatory forefinger, which is rigidly extended, he throws up his hand to high Heaven as he asks the President of the Local Government Board how much he supposes a niggardly Government allow on account of the salary of medical attendants at lunatic asylums?

Apr. 7.—A flux of honours. Mr. McMahon is the newly elected member for Limerick, one of the gentlemen with whom Mr. Parnell, acting as a Committee of Selection, from time to time endows the House of Commons. Time was when Mr. McMahon's ambition did not soar higher than a seat in the Council Chamber of his native town. But, working his way through a busy life, honours have been thrust upon him in almost breathless accumulation. Sitting below the Bar, awaiting the summons of the Speaker to take his seat in the historic assembly, Mr. McMahon complacently reviewed his career.

“And now,” he said, speaking half to himself and half to a compatriot who had undertaken to share the duty of introducing him, “I’m mamber for four Boords—the North Dublin Union, Drumcondra Commissioners, the Rathgar township, and *This*.<sup>”</sup>

Apr. 21.—Bulls. What an interesting little book might be made of a collection of Parliamentary phrases. Scarcely a debate but some member, by unintentional confusion of ideas or involution of phrase, produces a memorable sentence. It is some

time since Mr. O'Connor Power declared that "Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer has let the cat out of the bag it is time to take the bull by the horns." Mr. Hopwood once observed, with true pathos in his voice, "Don't drive the steam-engine of the law over people's consciences," imagery which Mr. Alderman Cotton excelled when, during one of the negotiations on the Eastern Question in the last Parliament, he declared that a "quarrel was so imminent it only required a spark to let slip the dogs of war." It was another member, whose name I forget, who shrewdly observed that, by taking some particular course, the Government were "opening the door to the thin end of the wedge." In a recent debate Sir George Campbell proposed, as a solution of the Egyptian difficulty, that we should "let the Khedive stand on his own bottom." "No, no!" said Mr. Gladstone, demolishing Colonel Stanley on his motion on the vote of credit, "it's no use the right hon. and gallant gentleman shaking his head in the teeth of his own words." It was in the same debate that Sir Stafford Northeote, amid loud cheers from the Conservatives, exclaimed, "Yes; but it's just because the Government strain at gnats that they are now obliged to swallow camels."

Apr. 14.—*After the levée.* Last night the Speaker held his second Parliamentary dinner, which was largely attended. The scene both at the dining-table and at the reception which follows is a very picturesque one, all the dinner guests being arrayed in Court uniform. Mr. Peel, following the practice of his predecessor, will continue to bid batches of the Parnellites to the feast, and they, also in accordance with recent practice, will continue with more or less politeness to decline. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that the Irish party never graced the Speaker's dinner with their presence. It was only in 1876, when they were at daggers drawn with authority, that they began haughtily to decline the advances of the Speaker. In the spring of 1874 no less a personage than Mr. Biggar, arrayed in velvet coat, velvet breeches, silk stockings, shoes with glittering buckles, and sword by his side, sat at meat with the Speaker. What is more, Mr. Biggar after the festivities, went home in a twopenny 'bus. He is now anxious to explain the circumstance on the ground that being new to Parliamentary usages, he believed that the acceptance of the Speaker's invitation was

peremptory, and of course the costume was indispensable. That he went to the dinner, and also went home in a 'bus, are facts vouched for by high authority.

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### CHAPTER XXX.

#### MR. C. SYKES AS A LEGISLATOR.

Mr. M. Scott breaks Silence—The Dearness of Money—Mr. C. Sykes as a Legislator—A Business Communication—Mr. Gladstone's Friday Nights—Mr. Cavendish Bentinck—A Difficult Explanation—A Modern Innovation—Mr. Stansfeld—An Economist.

May 2.—<sup>Mr. M.</sup> Nowhere is it truer than in the House of Commons that the world knows nothing of its greatest men. It would have been a rash prophet who <sup>Scott breaks silence.</sup> foretold at eleven o'clock to-night that a new star was about to appear on the Parliamentary horizon. The sitting had been dull and dispiriting. There had been the usual cannonade of questions, with Mr. Ashmead Bartlett as principal gunner. Two hours and a half had been occupied in deciding the foregone conclusion of morning sittings. Then Mr. Raikes, speaking as one having authority, had descended on alleged corrupt practices at Hereford. But Mr. Raikes, with many distinguished qualities, is not a lively speaker. Even the prospects of a personal question could not keep the House together. Hour after hour the benches had been empty, and only now had they filled up in anticipation of a division, members fresh from the delights of dinner being prepared to decide on a case they had not heard argued.

It was at this crisis that Mr. Montague Scott presented himself from a back seat above the gangway. For ten years his presence has lent an air of dignified gravity to this part of the House; but few remember to have heard him speak. Yet a little more than nine years ago he delivered a notable oration in defence of some county magistrates. A more widely known Parliamentary appearance was when he stood on the pedestal in

the lobby watching the turbulent throng of which Mr. Bradlaugh was the centre. The member for Northampton insisting in the face of the order of the House upon taking his seat had been seized by the police, and was being hustled out by the main staircase, at the bottom of which he was presently delivered with his coat torn, his hat smashed, his face flushed, and his stenographic pen broken. The lobby was a scene of struggling men, and there, on the pedestal, with arms folded, right foot slightly advanced, and face unmoved in its gravity, was the member for East Sussex, looking down upon the scene. He had come out with the other members to see the fun, and finding himself at some disadvantage had bethought himself of Zaccheus and the sycamore tree. Sycamore trees not growing in the lobby of the House of Commons, he climbed the pedestal, and naturally fell into statuesque attitude.

The moment Mr. Scott presented himself, and, amid a pause of expectation, drew himself up to his full height, and slowly surveyed the scene before him with slight reminiscences of his attitude on the pedestal, the House intuitively knew that great events were at hand. Considering the novelty of the situation, it was truly marvellous to note how Mr. Scott at once rose to its topmost height. Members addressing the House of Commons for the first time are, as a rule, painfully nervous. Their tongue shows a tendency to cleave to the roof of their mouth; the current of their language, which ran so freely at rehearsal, becomes a frozen stream, whence icicles drop slowly and painfully on the repelled audience; their gestures are constrained, and their pallid face betrays the pain they suffer.

Mr. Scott took to the dangerous waters of Parliamentary eloquence as a duckling takes to the farm-house pond. There was, perhaps, a little exuberance of gesture. He had a way of throwing out both arms as far as they would reach towards the Treasury bench, and then bringing them back till they extended almost horizontally from his shoulder blades, which suggested that he was about to take a standing jump. As he also leaned perilously far over the bench in front of him, members grew in time to be grateful for a little tuft of grey hair that stood straight out from the back of his head, and seemed to afford just that weight which, judiciously placed, preserved his equilibrium. Thunderous was his voice, when, in answer to some

interruption, he cried aloud, “ Will you hear me before I finish ? ” Deep, too, was his scorn when, the Attorney-General rising to correct him in a quotation, he said, leaning so far over the bench that the little tuft of hair waggled furiously in the effort to preserve the equilibrium, “ I do not wish to bandy words with the Attorney-General, but I have a memory—*now !* ” he added, shaking his head at the Attorney-General with triumphant intimation that he had settled *him*. Also there were evidences of a ferocity of nature quite unsuspected beneath the genial exterior of the hon. member when unrocked by the tempest of political conflict. “ I should like,” he said, between closed teeth, “ to be on the committee, and to put a few words to Mr. Myer.”

But the depth of his scorn, the height of his indignation, and the most perilous of his gymnastic exercises over the rail of the bench were preserved for references to a Mr. Scobei. This gentleman, it appears, is one of the official receivers in Bankruptcy appointed by the Board of Trade, a circumstance in itself condemnatory in the eyes of a good Conservative. It was when this gentleman’s name was introduced that the House was made aware of the fact that Mr. Scott had prepared his oration. It was thought from his sudden incursion and his fluent speech that he had risen on the spur of the moment. But at this stage he produced from the interior of his hat a large sheet of white paper, which he held at arm’s length, as if it were an explosive liable at any moment to go off. “ What do I find ? ” he said, suddenly, and with tremendous energy assaulting himself in the neighbourhood of his chest. What he could not find was his eye-glass, which he pursued under his waistcoat with an energy that for some moments defeated his purpose.

“ What do I find ? ” he repeated between his clenched teeth, when he had at last banged the *pince-nez* on the ridge of his indignant nose. “ This Mr. Toby— ” (“ Scobei,” growled Mr. Warton) ; “ this Mr. Scobei,” he proceeded, “ must be a respectable man. For why ? He has been appointed to an office under the Board of Trade by the right hon. gentleman the President.”

No pen could describe the withering tones in which this testimony to the respectability of Mr. Scobei was uttered. But not then or later could Mr. Scott remember the name of this paragon patronised by Mr. Chamberlain. “ This Mr. Stoby,”

he said, after another exciting search for his eye-glass ("Scobe!'" whispered the chorus at his side); "this Mr. Stomey," he proceeded, wrestling with the manuscript as if he had got the unfortunate Receiver in Bankruptey by the nape of the neck, "is, as I have said before, a respectable man—a very respectable man."

But this lapse of memory as to a particular name was an immaterial flaw in an oration otherwise distinguished by unusual vigour and irresistible conclusiveness. It received a generous meed of applause from a now crowded House that cheered and laughed, and cheered again, whilst, set up aloft on the topmost bench, Mr. Montague Scott waved his arms, made raids upon his eye-glass, alternately raised his voice till it filled the House with a roar of thunder, and, turning lightly to banter or sarcasm, dropped it to conversational pitch. To see him a few minutes later, sitting with folded arms and impassive face, whilst members crowded round to congratulate him, no one would have thought, as previously no one had suspected, that he was capable of being so deeply moved himself, or being the cause of such profound emotion in others.

May 2.—The dearness of money. Lord Coleridge, who is a charming story-teller, has brought home a new batch from the United

States. The best relates to Mr. Evarts, a prominent American, well known in this country. Lord Coleridge was the guest of Mr. Evarts in a house which formerly belonged to George Washington. At the end of the grounds the Potomac river broadly rolls. Talking about the prowess of George Washington in other ways, Lord Coleridge said :

"I have heard he was a very strong man physically, and that, standing on the lawn here, he could throw a dollar right across the river on to the other bank."

Mr. Evarts paused a moment to measure the breadth of the river with his eye. It seemed rather a "tall" story, but it was not for him to belittle the father of his country in the eyes of a foreigner.

"Don't you believe it?" asked Lord Coleridge.

"Yes," Mr. Evarts replied, "I think it's very likely to be true. You know a dollar would go much farther in those days than it does now."

May 17.—Mr. C. Sykes as a legislator.

Just before midnight Mr. Christopher Sykes entered, standing at the Bar and taking that survey of the scene which is habitual with him. Mr. Sykes always enters the House and looks round with an air half-vexed and wholly surprised at discovering members still at it. He cannot for the life of him understand why members, some of them really respectable men, can sit here night after night talking and voting, and, he has heard, even neglecting the opportunity of going to dinner. He never leaves the House save with the conviction that next time he comes back he will find the game played out, and never enters without this curiously surprised look at discovering members still here, and "at it again." Usually, after standing a moment at the Bar, and convincing himself of the reality of the situation, he retires to the gallery, where he can, seated and at a convenient distance from undesirable people, look down upon this extraordinary and incomprehensible gathering of human beings. To-night, however, he walked up the House and took his seat immediately behind the front Opposition bench, where Lord Henry Lennox, wakened by tumbling forward for the third time, discovered him, and eagerly seized the opportunity of enjoying his unwonted companionship. Lord Henry twittered on, but Mr. Sykes responded only in monosyllables. He was evidently more than usually troubled with his ever-fresh, never-answered problem of the House of Commons meeting every day and sitting through long hours of the night. He would like to ask why they did it, what joy they found in it, or what compensation for other pleasures lost? But that would require a continued effort of articulate speech, and would, on the whole, be more of a bore than sitting quiet and wondering about it. So while Lord Henry Lennox, wide awake now, chirruped by his side, Mr. Sykes gazed round the House, always with a slightly startled, deeply puzzled look.

Presently the Orders were run through, and there happened a strange and memorable thing. Members were beginning to pick up their hats, get their papers together, and move away, when it was discovered that Mr. Christopher Sykes was on his legs! There he stood behind the empty front bench, tall, grave, white-waistcoated, and wearing in his buttonhole the white flower of a blameless life. In strange contrast with

his impassive figure was the excitement of Lord Henry Lennox, who moved about in a kind of delirium of ecstasy, nodding and smiling all round, chortling in his joy, as if he were personally responsible for bringing about the phenomenon now witnessed by the House. Mr. Sykes had a paper in one hand, and stared gravely at the Speaker, but said never a word. The Speaker rose and observed, "Bill to amend the Fisheries (Oysters, Crabs, and Lobsters) Act, 1877." All this time Mr. Sykes was standing, in defiance of rule, as solemnly as if he were at the altar, and indeed, with his white waistcoat and his white rose, looking very like a bridegroom who was not sure he was doing right.

Then the House knew why it had been kept sitting on a purposeless Friday night at the end of a wearisome week. For twenty years Mr. Sykes has had a seat in the House. He has voted with intelligence and assiduity; but he has never spoken, and as for actually assisting in national legislation, that were too much to look for. But whilst superficial persons thought he was idling his time, unmindful of the duties and responsibilities of his high position, he was quietly at work. The lowly lobster, the cumbrous crab, and the too expensive oyster had occupied his waking thoughts, and, though no reference is made to them in the title of the Bill, already sufficiently long, it is probable that the mind of Mr. Christopher Sykes has found room to bestow a thought upon the comely cockle and the melancholy mussel.

The House of Commons, always susceptible to generous instincts, acknowledged its appreciation of Mr. Sykes's legislative endeavours by loud and general cheering. Sir Wilfrid Lawson expressed the general feeling when he observed that this was a very important measure, and it was usual when Bills of imperial interest were brought in that some explanation should be given for their provisions. Couldn't the hon. gentleman say a few words in explanation of the Bill? Mr. Sykes, however, felt that he had done very well for one night. The request was flattering, and the interest excited by the appearance of his Parliamentary bantling promised well for its future. But to bring in a Bill and make a speech on the same night was more than could be expected. He only sat and stared at Sir Wilfrid Lawson as if he were a hitherto unnoted specimen of the periwinkle, who

perhaps might, if he had thought of him before, have been included in the Bill.

Leave being given to introduce the Bill, the House was subjected to a second sensation. Mr. Sykes suddenly rose, and at a great pace, with long strides, passed down the floor of the House. What was going to happen now? A sudden thought struck both sides of the House. The hon. member is well known in his character of Amphitryon—*le véritable Amphitryon où l'on dine*. At his table an exalted personage has been known to take soup twice, and to ask for a second slice of the saddle of mutton. The happy thought had evidently occurred to Mr. Sykes, apropos of his Bill, that a little supper would be the sort of thing wherewith to celebrate the occasion, and would be none the worse for being hastily arranged. Oysters were out of season, but lobsters and crabs would serve. Mr. Warton audibly smacked his lips, and the Irish members enthusiastically cheered.

Mr. Sykes, having reached the line which marks the Bar, halted, turned round, and, sidling away to the left with a crab-like movement, reached the cross benches, and with a low bow was discovered marching down the House erect and irresistible, much as his famed ancestor, Guillaume de Sikes, at the Battle of Towton strode forth, and tauntingly tossed his white rose in the face of the Lancastrian spearmen. It was clear that he was "bringing in his Bill," though a little prematurely. It is the custom for members in charge of Bills, when all the business on the paper is disposed of, to stand at the Bar till the Speaker calls upon them by name, whereupon they advance to the table. But here was Mr. Sykes standing at the table, fixing the Speaker with grave regard, while the right hon. gentleman, with his head turned on one side and his shoulders working with convulsive movement, was speechless. As for members in position of less responsibility, they rolled about the benches with uncontrollable laughter, which to Mr. Sykes was only another of their strange ways, alike incomprehensible and immaterial.

As nothing seemed to come of standing at the table, he retired backward a few paces, bowed with unspeakable gravity, and came up once more to the charge. He was at length with some difficulty induced to take a seat on the Treasury bench, and the Speaker having with a violent effort resumed his gravity,

went on with the business. Then the Solicitor-General and Mr. Hibbert took Mr. Sykes in charge, led him down to the Bar, and kept him there till the Speaker called "Mr. Sykes." Now was his time, and advancing with unruffled gravity he once more reached the table, and, handing the Bill in, immediately retired. Here was a fresh breach of Parliamentary rules. Members bringing in Bills must stand at the table whilst the clerk reads the title, and then, in response to a question from the Speaker, they name a day for the second reading. Mr. Sykes had to be brought back to go through this formula, which he did with imperturbable gravity. At length he was free to go, and he strode out of the House amid uproarious cheers, conscious that he had not lived in vain.

May 20.—A business communication.

A Welsh member, who is in the lime business, is showing about to-night a letter his manager has received. The writer is a builder who, some time ago taking to drink, became a bankrupt. He has now reformed, has recommenced business, and joined the Salvation Army. The letter is in reply to a request for references:—

Sir,—I am not a little surprised that you should want a Reference but I am alred verry much as I have ad a stroke near 2 years ago but I thank God I am in the land of the living and if you want a refarance all the Ref i can give is the lord and saviour Jesus Christ and money in a month with my regards as i owe you nothink

yours truly

May 23.—Mr. Gladstone's Friday nights.

The "Lundis" of Saint Beuve are well known if not now widely read. But graceful and charming though they be, they lack the attraction of Mr. Gladstone's Friday evenings. In the House of Commons Friday evening is, like Tuesday, especially reserved for discussion of those interesting but not precisely practical topics which absorb the attention of private members. For example, if the subject of proportional representation were to be brought forward in the House for much needed explanation, Sir John Lubbock and Mr. Blennerhassett would probably secure a place on a Friday evening. It might reasonably be supposed that Mr. Gladstone, with the cares of Europe and Asia on his back, would gratefully accept the opportunity provided by the gentle

unimportance of Friday night to go home and rest. On the contrary, he is, perhaps, the most constant attendant on Friday nights, and, as happened to-night, has not infrequently taken the opportunity to deliver a speech quite out of the common way. The nearly empty chamber, the sense of absence of serious import in the proceedings, the sound of his own voice, the gentle fluttering of memory's wings, and the rapt attention of the circle gathered around him, work a subtle spell, changing the eager politician, the overweighted statesman, into the accomplished *raconteur*, who draws upon a rarely matched store of memory and discourses about nothing with simple yet unrivalled eloquence. On these occasions he talks of times when he was "a Parliamentary youngster," and babbles of Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, Sir George Cornewall Lewis, and other heroes of departed days.

May 23. — Mr.  
Cavendish  
Bentinck.

Comparatively few men have seen a stormy-petrel or have any sound idea as to how it would conduct itself in the House of Commons. Nevertheless, there is an undefined something about Mr. Cavendish Bentinck's incursion into debate that brings to mind that interesting bird. Even in his quietest moments there is a total absence of repose about the right hon. gentleman. His quick instincts and his strong sympathies constantly drive him in this way or that, and the nobility characteristic of his nature is communicated even to his personal appearance. The hair of his head seems distraught with conflicting emotions, and his shirt appears to be passionately endeavouring to "get at" Mr. Gladstone on the Treasury bench opposite. As a rule, Mr. Bentinck's interposition in debate is occasioned by the excitement of controversy on great principles. He is a high authority on art, has his views on frescoes, and holds a decided opinion as to the Wellington monument. On these and kindred subjects he will discourse with a fierce volubility that sometimes makes his meaning a little cloudy, and deprives a listening Senate of the full advantage of his opinion. But his chiefest and always irresistible attraction to a plunge into debate is Mr. Gladstone. Whether in opposition or in office, the very sight of the right hon. gentleman acts upon him as a red flag upon an infuriate bull.

The Premier can, as the House knows from recent experience, storm and rage with the best of them ; but when he replies to Mr. Bentinck he is always in his softest mood, his smiling countenance contrasting with the storm-tossed visage of the member for Whitehaven. He plays with him with loftiest courtesy and most exquisite humour, whilst the House roars with laughter, and Mr. Bentinck tosses about on his seat, snaps out denials, and barks around the heels of his imperturbable antagonist, as an irate Skye terrier might, from a respectable distance, snarl at a mastiff, the weight of whose paw he had just felt.

June 4.—A difficult explanation.

In Conservative circles, Mr. Gladstone's recent exhibition of dialectical skill in dealing with a burning subject recalls an old story. It is said that when Garibaldi first came to England there was some talk of his marrying a wealthy widow, much devoted to his cause.

Objection was taken that he was married already.

“ What would you do with his wife ? ” was asked in the circle where the matter was being discussed.

“ You must get Gladstone to explain her away,” was the answer attributed to Mr. Beresford Hope.

June 6.—A modern innovation. Glancing round the House to-night, one notes that of thirteen Ministers on the Treasury bench every one is in dinner dress, a sight upon which Mr. Disraeli would have frowned had he been present. The House has now grown so accustomed to see Ministers and ex-Ministers in dinner dress that it quite forgets that so recently as the last Parliament the appearance of a Minister in dinner dress was an event that excited instant attention. Mr. Disraeli himself, whether in Office or in Opposition, only on the rarest occasions came down in dinner dress. The occasions were, indeed, so rare that no particular one recurs to the mind. He entertained quite old-fashioned notions about the duty of one who held, or had held, Ministerial office. During the days between 1868 and 1874, when he and his party tarried in the wilderness, there was no sight more constant than his well-known figure, sitting with folded arms, one leg crossed over the other, head bowed, but eyes, ever watchful, fixed on the ranks opposite. If there were room

for increased vigilance of attendance it was shown when he came into office. He was in his place early and remained late, whether the business were important or trivial, and he was always in morning dress.

In respect of assiduity of attendance while in office he scarcely excelled Mr. Gladstone, who to this day, whatever may be going forward, is pretty sure to be found on the Treasury bench. Of late the exuberance of growing youth has led the Premier into the primrose-path of dalliance with dinner-parties. It has come to pass that it is by no means an unfrequent sight, more particularly on Tuesdays and Fridays, to find the Premier in evening dress, and sometimes with a flower in his buttonhole. But it is only within the last two years that this has become recurrent.

The habitual breaking of the unwritten law which a dozen years ago forbade the forcible intrusion of evidence that her Majesty's Ministers and ex-Ministers found time to dine dates from the first Session of the Disraelian Parliament. Mr. Gladstone, having convinced himself that he had done with the pomps and vanities of the political world, had retired from the leadership. There were many candidates for his place, and insensibly it came to pass that when a gentleman desired it to be understood that he for one was not putting himself up for the leadership, he came down in dinner dress, bringing a toothpick with him. Let others scorn delights and live laborious days. For him the prize was not adequate to the toil of winning it. It was noticed at the time that the last man but one to preserve the Spartan simplicity of morning dress was Mr. Forster. The very last to yield was Sir Wm. Harcourt. But whilst the demoralised Opposition yielded to social pleasures, the Ministry, always under the eye of their Leader, kept to morning dress. If any guilty junior had been induced to dine out he was always careful to keep down at the far end of the Treasury bench, where the calm gaze of his chief was not likely to fall upon him.

June 11. — Mr. Stansfeld. It was bareheaded and upstanding, slightly crooked like the warning forefinger of Fate, that Mr. Newdegate made the notable discovery with respect to the speech of Mr. Stansfeld on the Woman's Suffrage Question.

"The speech of the right hon. gentleman," he said, in loud

but thrilling tones, "has cleared the ground. Never have I known a plainer effort to enforce the despotism of democracy."

This was a curious, even an enigmatical remark. Mr. Stansfeld is, perhaps, the last man in the world to suggest the idea of enforcing anything, or wielding a despotism of any kind. He is a historic fragment, interesting in his way, but not in the direction pointed out by Mr. Newdegate. It is difficult to decide whether it is more curious to reflect upon his having at one time been the rising hope of the Radical Party, or of his having held a seat in the Liberal Cabinet. Of all the corner men who dot the Liberal benches Mr. Stansfeld's rise was the most rapid and his fall the most complete. Now he has avowedly done with practical politics, devoting his talents and his energies to the political enfranchisement of woman and the repeal of an obnoxious Act. For Mr. Newdegate solemnly to denounce him as an exponent of the despotism of democracy is to lead to the suspicion that the member for Warwickshire does, after all, sometimes joke.

Apart from the personal esteem for an honest and amiable man, Mr. Stansfeld's reappearance to-night was an interesting event. His very style of speaking is strange to the present generation of the House of Commons. The prim precision of pronunciation which will not permit the most immaterial syllable to escape notice, the monotonous intonation, the recurring gesture, the pedantic construction of the sentences, and the preference for words of four syllables, form a combination which strikes the House as something strange. There is no parallel in Parliament to the stiff and lifeless oratory of Mr. Stansfeld. Mr. P. J. Smyth's eloquence is of the same prepared and scholastic type, though of an infinitely higher order. Mr. Smyth really would be an orator of the supremest class if he only would give the House the earliest draft of his oration. It would not be so finished, but it would be more effective. On the rare occasions when Mr. Smyth recites a speech members flock in to hear him, and take a certain amount of intellectual pleasure in the glowing periods and ornate eloquence of the prose poem. But, after all, there is the sense that it is only a recitation, and does not go either to the head or the heart of the audience, as would a few broken sentences uttered on the spur of the moment.

The dry and neatly scraped bones of Mr. Stansfeld's oration to-night were, happily, once rattled by a hearty burst of laughter on the part of the audience, of complicity in which it need hardly be said the right hon. gentleman was himself wholly innocent.

It came about in the earlier portion of his speech, where he was showing how scurvily his personal loyalty had been treated when the Prime Minister had declined to imperil the Franchise Bill by tacking on to it a provision for the enfranchisement of woman.

"I have," he said, "been among the most sincere members of the party of the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government."

Mr. Gladstone, with kindest intention, turned round and loudly expressed assent.

"I have never thwarted him in any of his great purposes."

"Hear, hear!" Mr. Gladstone cried, turning round again and nodding with increased vigour. Affected almost to tears by this friendly and public recognition by his former chief, Mr. Stansfeld proceeded—

"I have given the Government ungrudging support."

"Hear, hear!" cried the indefatigable Premier.

"Though," Mr. Stansfeld continued, in a quivering voice, "I have placed no value upon it."

"Hear, hear, hear!" cried Mr. Gladstone, getting into the swing of the thing, and not perceiving whither his generous fervour had led him.

This was a welcome interlude for a House already depressed, and the laughter grew uproarious when the Premier rose and gravely explained that he had not meant that he placed no value upon Mr. Stansfeld's services, but, on the contrary, estimated them at high value.

June 12. — An Tom Collins, though wealthy, is one of the economist. thriftiest of men, ever on the look-out to save sixpence. This explains one of Sir Wilfrid Lawson's best *bon mots*. After Mr. Collins had been elected for Knaresborough, some days elapsed before he turned up at the House. He had been a well-known Parliamentary character for years, and some anxiety was expressed to see him.

"Odd, isn't it," somebody said to Sir Wilfrid, "that Tom Collins doesn't turn up?"

"Not at all," said Sir Wilfrid; "he's waiting for an excursion train."

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### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### ANOTHER DUEL AVERTED.

Sir P. O'Brien sends a Challenge—Mr. Chamberlain's Orchids—Negativating a Debate—Summer Time—Mr. Courtney Creates a Sensation—Sir John Hay in Peril—A Critical Division—The Lord Chancellor's Parrot—Mr. Newdegate in Trouble.

June 27.—Sir P. O'Brien sends a challenge. The few people loitering in the lobby at a quarter to three this morning were puzzled to see Sir Patrick O'Brien walking up and down with rapid stride, his hands deep set in his pocket, and his eyes ever fixed upon the doorway, in the evident expectation of some one forthcoming.

He had entered the House an hour earlier, and had five minutes before the time noted burst through into the lobby, and to the surprise and alarm of the doorkeepers, had straightway commenced his sentry pace at the doorway.

What kept him out of his bed at this advanced period of the night was his anxiety with respect to the Revision of Jurors and Voters List (County Dublin) Bill. At two o'clock Sir Patrick had interposed in debate, and had offered some lucid remarks for the information of the Committee. These had been somewhat contemptuously received by hon. members from Ireland sitting immediately opposite, and Sir Patrick gracefully diverged into a few remarks of a personal character. "The young sea serpent from county Clare," to whom he had alluded on a famous occasion, did not happen to be present. But Mr. Harrington—who, as Sir Patrick incidentally observed, "was carrying parcels for a wage of three and sixpence a week, whilst he (Sir Patrick) represented King's County in Parliament"—began to snigger.

Sir Patrick resumed his seat at the conclusion of his somewhat discursive remarks, and steadily gazed across the House

at the little group of Parnellites, who were assisting in the legislation of the country. At first he got Mr. Harrington in the right focus, and in an emphatic aside made the remark already quoted, descriptive of Mr. Harrington's industrial pursuits at an earlier period of his career. Somehow the focus of the hon. baronet got slightly moved, and became concentrated upon Mr. O'Brien, who, half asleep, with his arm cast over the back of the bench, was engaged in study of the Bill. The more Sir Patrick looked the more certain he became that it was Mr. O'Brien, not Mr. Harrington, who had offensively interrupted him.

"The question is," said Sir Arthur Otway, "that Clause 3 stand part of the Bill."

"Mr. Otway," said Sir Patrick, rising to his feet, and fixing a glowering eye upon the unconscious Mr. O'Brien, "the hon. member for Mallow interrupted me on a former occasion, and I now desire to give him an opportunity of explaining his meaning. What do you want?" he added, leaning over the back of the bench before him, and directly interrogating the astonished member for Mallow. "What do you want?" he repeated, scarcely giving him time to formulate his desires. "What do you want?" he shouted for the third time.

Thus pressed, Mr. O'Brien rose and said, "If the hon. baronet is at all curious as to what I mean, I will be glad to let him know some day in King's County."

Sir Patrick's eyes blazed with delight. This was something like business, and more than he had expected. But it was a far cry to King's County, and, being of a practical mind, he determined to settle the preliminaries forthwith.

"Mr. Otway," he cried. Mr. Harrington audibly sniggered.

"Mr. Otway," he repeated. More sniggering from the benches opposite.

"SIR ARTHUR OTWAY!" he thundered, without deigning to notice the interruption, "There is a much less distance than King's County at which the hon. member can ascertain what I think about him, and how I will deal with him."

"Order, order!" cried the Chairman, and Sir Patrick, who is nothing if not orderly, at once resumed his seat.

But his desire for information as to the particular condition of Mr. O'Brien's mind was not satiated. Leaning forward, with

his hands on the bench, he called across the House, "Afraid?" Mr. O'Brien, not yet having answered the other question, did not seem disposed to take up this fresh inquiry. But Sir Patrick was not to be thwarted in his thirst for information. "Afraid?" he again cried with insinuating, coaxing tone, which intimated, as well as fuller speech could have done, that Mr. O'Brien had better make a clean breast of it. But Mr. O'Brien was evidently in no mood for confession, and, having five times unavailingly repeated his inquiry, Sir Patrick rose and walked out of the House, keeping his eye upon Mr. O'Brien with mute invitation to follow.

It was thus he reached the Lobby, and there began that hurried pacing to and fro which smote the doorkeepers with numb apprehension. Emissaries came out from both sides of the House and approached the irate baronet. But Mr. O'Brien tarried under the protection of the Chairman's eye. Sir Patrick would hold converse with none, haughtily waving them off, and still keeping his eyes fixed with hungry look upon the doorway. At last The O'Gorman Mahon came forth, and Sir Patrick rushed up to him with effusion. The Mahon has been "out" more times than any man living, except, perhaps, a German student.

"You'll see me through this," said Sir Patrick, holding out his hand. The Mahon is growing in years now, having been born with the century, but this long-intermittent invitation caused him to renew his youth like the eagle. It was touching to see how he instinctively drew himself up to his full height, how a soft light beamed in his eyes, and how an expression of chaste content passed over his furrowed face.

"Sir Pat, I will," he said, grasping the outstretched hand.

This little preliminary being arranged, Sir Patrick joyously re-entered the House, and personally informed Mr. O'Brien, who did not by any means seem to share his satisfaction. Of course, nothing more would be needed. Mr. O'Brien would name his second, who would have a little interview with The O'Gorman Mahon, and there was no reason why the thing should not be settled right off. There was the terrace of the House of Commons, admirably suited for the purpose, or, with the table removed, "Gosset's room" might do. So Sir Patrick recommenced his walk up and down outside the doorway. Mr. O'Brien did not immediately come. But that was no matter.

Of course, he had to make his own arrangements, and such was the prejudice of the House of Commons at the present day that there might be a difficulty in the matter. There was no particular hurry. Now everything was *en train* he could wait.

He waited five minutes, and nobody came. Ten minutes flew by, and still neither principal nor second appeared. A quarter to three rang out from a hundred clocks over the silent city, and still Mr. O'Brien did not keep the tryst.

"Come away now, Sir Pat," said The Mahon. "Nothing can be done to-night. We'll see about it to-morrow."

So Sir Patrick, with one lingering glance at the doorway, suffered himself to be led out, and at due interval, after judicious scouting, Mr. O'Brien issued forth and got to his bed unhurt.

June 29.—Mr.  
Chamberlain's  
orchids.

The Parisians have evidently heard of Mr. Chamberlain's love of orchids, and have accordingly invented an appropriate story. The President of the Board of Trade is not mentioned by name, but there is no other *Ministre Anglais* whom the cap would fit. According to the veracious chronicler of the Boulevards, the Minister was the other day (Mr. Chamberlain, by the way, has not been in Paris this year) walking along the Quai de la Mégisserie when he observed in a shop window an orchid of extraordinary beauty and rarity. "How much is this orchid?" he asked the shopkeeper. "£20," was the reply. "Is it known in France?" he asked. "No, sir," said the shopkeeper, "I am the sole possessor, and have not had it long." *Le Ministre Anglais* hereupon took from his purse a 500 franc note which he handed to the shopkeeper. Then taking the plant he tore it to pieces and trod it under foot. "I have one of that kind," he explained to the astonished shopkeeper, "and I would rather that nobody else in Europe had another."

June 30.—Nega-  
tive a debate.

Since the debate on the Bill for the Abolition of the Corn Laws, described by Mr. Disraeli in a famous passage, no such remarkable scene has taken place as that which to-night swiftly passed before the eyes of the House of Commons. It had been arranged that Mr. Bruce should move a Vote of Censure on the Government in respect of their Egyptian policy, the third in a Session not quite five months old.

Questions were over pretty early, Mr. Gladstone rising at ten minutes past five to move that the Orders of the Day be postponed till after Mr. Bruce's motion.

After some conversation, Mr. Goschen appeared upon the scene, and gave a new turn to affairs. Rising hurriedly, he declared his opinion that, looking at the circumstances of the case, the House of Commons would best do its duty if it were to refuse to agree to the postponement of the Orders of the Day, with the specific object of furnishing an opportunity of bringing on the Vote of Censure. He freely admitted that the Government were bound to give a day when the leaders of the Opposition formally demanded it, and the leaders of the Opposition were bound to take the course they had adopted, because they felt that if they did not do so, some uncontrollable member of their party would. But the House of Commons was at liberty to think of what was best for the country, and the argument was overwhelmingly in favour of the opinion that the debate ought not to proceed. The House of Commons ought not to be driven into the division lobby at an inopportune time to decide upon an incomplete case.

Mr. Goschen's speech made a profound sensation, growing as—observing the widening assent on the Liberal side—he more firmly stated his view. At first the approving cheers were only partial, but when he sat down there was unanimous applause both above and below the gangway on the Liberal side. On the Treasury bench a rapid interchange of views took place between Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Childers, who sat on his left hand. They were evidently as much taken aback as the main body of their supporters, and hastily discussed this startling proposal.

The House was in no humour for further discussion, and at twenty minutes to six the question was put that the Orders of the Day be postponed. There was a half-hearted cry of "Aye" from the Conservative side, and a thunderous shout of "No" from the Liberals. Amid a buzz of excited conversation, the House was cleared for the division. The Speaker naming Lord Richard Grosvenor and Lord Kensington, the Government whips, to "tell" in favour of the motion, there was much laughter and cheering. Mr. Goschen and Mr. Illingworth "told" for the noes. As soon as the Speaker cried "Ayes to

the right, noes to the left," the Liberals above and below the gangway rose in a mass, and, amid repeated cheering, moved out to the left. At the same time Mr. Gladstone rose, and heading the long file of Ministers, moved off to the right to support a motion which the long-established etiquette of Parliament forced upon his acceptance.

In a quarter of an hour members had returned, the whips telling for the supporters of the motion coming in first, thus indicating how the day had gone. A minute or two later the tellers for the other side came in, and the paper being handed to Mr. Goschen in token of victory, enthusiastic cheering rose from the Liberal benches, repeated again and again when the figures were announced, showing that by 190 to 148 opportunity for debating the Vote of Censure had been refused to the House of Commons.

July 4.—Summer time. The picnic air of the House of Commons corresponded strangely with the truly melancholy tone of the proceedings. White waistcoats, white trousers, drab coats, and white hats shone all over the House. No one would have been surprised to see Sir Wilfrid Lawson with a green veil draped round his hat, or to have watched Sir M. Hicks-Beach dragging a hamper from under the front Opposition bench and spreading forth a comfortable lunch within measurable distance of Mr. Cavendish Bentinck. The peculiarity of these outbursts of summer clothing is their suddenness. One day the House shall be full of figures draped in the funereal black dear to Englishmen. The next there is an epidemic of white waistcoats, an outbreak of whitey-brown suits, and a universal development of drab hats. In times gone by Mr. Charles Lewis was wont to attract some attention by appearing amid the snows of February and the east winds of March clad in the glory of a white waistcoat. It is true that he modified the exuberance by also wearing a squarely cut black coat and trousers to match. But that only excited increased attention, and more forcibly suggested the undertaker at a wayzgoose. Mr. Lewis has learned a great deal since then. The once famous white waistcoat has disappeared. It was never, at least not after its first manifestations, regarded in the light of the swallow that hails the coming summer. In early days members noted it and

began to think of their own summer wardrobe and the undesirability of being far behind in decking themselves out. But it soon became clear that Mr. Charles Lewis's white waistcoat had no meteorological significance. It was merely a matter of taste, and the member for Derry was left through February and March in exclusive possession of its enjoyment.

The real swallow of the House of Commons is Mr. Monk. Through many Sessions the appearance of the uncompromising light suit, with hat to match, has been anxiously looked for. Mr. Monk, it is well known, makes a study of the subject. Fully aware of the responsibilities of his position, he does not put on the suit till he has carefully considered the season, comparing the possibilities of the immediate future with the records of former years. The elder members of the House have come to look to him as the fisherman about to put forth to sea consults the prognostication of the meteorological department, and it should be recorded to his honour that rarely have they been deceived. The fact that a mistake was made this Session does not unduly weigh with the generous mind. It might be passed over without notice. But though men talk of it only in whispers it *is* spoken of, and no harm can be done by open reference.

Just before the Whitsun Recess, on a sunny afternoon, when, as it happened, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett was accusing Mr. Gladstone of betraying his country, members became aware of the entrance of a figure clad from head to foot in a whitey-brown suit. Seated, with hat on, the harmony was complete, nor was it disturbed when the figure stood up uncovered, for the hair was carefully matched to the tone of the clothes. This was Mr. Monk, and members felt that summer had really come. The next day the House blossomed with summer clothes, and the same night came the east wind shrivelling up the summer clad senators as if they were so many violets born before their time. The east wind lasted day after day. The white garments were set aside, and a coolness sprang up between the majority of the House and the member for Gloucester.

This experience, rare, perhaps unique, in his history, has induced extra caution in the mind of Mr. Monk. It was only yesterday, with the thermometer at ninety in the shade, that again the historic suit dazzled the public eye. That confidence,

though shaken, was not altogether lost was abundantly testified to-day, when, with one consent, black clothes were discarded, and the floor of the House of Commons looked more or less like a field studded with Marguerites.

Mr. Courtney creates a sensation. Last week, before Mr. Monk had authorised any such demonstration, Mr. Courtney created

a pained surprise by appearing in the most remarkable pair of trousers seen out of the tropics. Trembling between canary tint and cream colour, silken in substance, gauzy in texture, the garment was almost obtrusive in its tendency to wrinkle. Mr. Courtney is, or used to be, a man of uncompromising Radical tendencies. This amazing pair of trousers was evidence of a bold originality of mind. But the contamination of official life was shown in the spirit of compromise that dominated his dress taken as a whole. Whilst from the waist downwards he flouted the ordinary fashion of the town, above the girdle he wore the ordinary black frock coat and waist-coat. The combination was not happy, and in the present troubled state of affairs at home and abroad was a fresh complication not likely to be viewed with satisfaction by his colleagues.

Sir John Hay in peril. No action, however thoughtlessly undertaken, is without its influence, more or less fateful. Sir John Hay, excited by the demonstration made by the Secretary to the Treasury, a day or two later presented himself to an almost paralysed House in an extraordinary costume, an arrangement in yellow and white. More gossamer in texture even than the garment of the Secretary to the Treasury, Sir John's suit added a really alarming quality of fulness of make. No one could see the gallant admiral walk down the floor of the House without holding his breath. It is well known that ventilation is provided in the House of Commons by a strong indraught of air from cellars covered by an open fretwork of iron, which forms the flooring of the chamber. What if an extra gust were to catch Sir John as he walked towards the door? It would inevitably fill his suit as if it were a balloon, and the House would have realised in actual Parliamentary life a scene in Mr. Blackmore's last novel,

scouted for its alleged grotesque improbability. Tommy Upmore, M.P., it will be remembered, at a critical period of national history, lightly floated to the roof of the House of Commons, waved the Union Jack, and so saved the Empire. No one can say how near the House of Commons has been during the last four days to the discovery of Sir John Hay, in distended summer clothing, vainly endeavouring to catch the Speaker's eye as he slowly revolved round the glass ceiling.

July 11.—A critical division. The spectacle of two elderly gentlemen, well dressed and apparently respectably connected, standing one on either side of the table of the House of Lords, whilst the chamber was filled with cries of "Granville!" answered by calls for "Cairns!" must have stricken the stranger in the gallery with a high sense of the character of the august assembly. The question upon which the scene arose was of imperial importance. Had Lord Salisbury said that he would not discuss Redistribution with a rope round his neck, or had he not? The noble marquis, taking the earliest opportunity of putting himself right with the public on this matter, had declared that the statement made by the Prime Minister was an utter fabrication, which is as near as one can go in Parliament to telling another man he lies.

Mr. Gladstone had wantonly said that Lord Salisbury had said to some unnamed third party that he would not discuss Redistribution with a rope round his neck. Lord Salisbury, in a speech of some length and detail, had said he had not said anything of the kind. There it might almost have been thought the matter should rest. There was no reason that any one could see why Lord Salisbury should not have made the remark about the rope. It was not a criminal observation, and, indeed, as Mr. Gladstone subsequently observed, it was an apposite way of expressing the view entertained by Lord Salisbury. Still the leader of the Opposition had found it necessary to interpose, and vehemently repudiate the remark, and there, as it seemed, was a natural end of the affair. But Earl Granville and Lord Cairns had something to say, and were so eager to say it, that one would not yield precedence to the other. There they stood, facing each other across the table, as two wrestlers exchange regards before attempting a mutual grip.

"I think," said Lord Cairns, with insinuating manner, "the noble earl would desire me to say one or two words."

By all means; Lord Granville had not the slightest objection, only he must speak first. Ignoring Lord Cairns, who still stood at the table, he proceeded with his speech, and had got through a whole sentence, when Lord Cairns again managed to work in a word.

"I wish to speak on the same subject," he plaintively said.

This persistency was exceedingly inconvenient. In some parts of the East End, when ballad singers hunt in couples, they stand face to face and sing alternate verses. Lord Granville might have gone on, say for six sentences, then given Lord Cairns a turn for as much. There was no precedent for this it is true. But precedents, unlike poets, are made, not born; and there is a sore need for establishing a new one in the case of two peers rising at the same time with urgent desire to address the House. In the Commons this difficulty is met in the simplest and most effective manner. The Speaker calls upon whomsoever he will, and from this choice there is no appeal. What happens in the Lords was abundantly testified to throughout the debate of Monday and Tuesday. As soon as one peer resumed his seat, half-a-dozen, sometimes a dozen, rose from various parts of the House, and there followed a sound like the gabble from a well-populated farmyard, as in various tones and keys the candidates cried, "My lords!" "My lords!" "My lords!" These conflicts usually end in the most undesirable manner. It is peers more or less like Lord Brabourne who invariably succeed in gaining a hearing, the more sensitive retiring from the unseemly conflict.

The difficulty of to-night was solved by Lord Beauchamp, who jumped up and hotly moved that Lord Cairns be heard. Up sprang the Earl of Cork and Viscount Enfield, and shouted with one voice, "I move as an amendment that Earl Granville be heard." Then, and not till then, did the two noble earls retire from the table, resuming their seats, whilst the Lord Chancellor formally put to the House of Peers the question as to which of the two noble lords should be heard first. More than this, the House divided with all the ceremony that attends divisions on Irish Land Bills and Reform Bills. When it was announced that by a majority of one Lord Granville had

obtained precedence, the twenty-seven peers who had secured this stupendous victory shouted themselves hoarse. It is questionable whether when the Franchise Bill passes its final stage in the Lords there will be such exultant cheering as there was at this great victory.

July 18. — The Lord Chancellor's parrot. There is a wicked story current to-night about the Lord Chancellor. Lord Selborne's town house is in Portland Place, close by Regent's Park. Returning home one evening in the present summer the Lord Chancellor found all his family out. Inquiring where they were, he was told that the favourite parrot had got out of its cage and flown away into Regent's Park, and that the ladies of the family had gone in search of it. His lordship thought a stroll in the park would not be disagreeable, and he accordingly went in quest of his two younger daughters, who had gone in search of the parrot. Presently he discovered a crowd round a tree in the park, and in the centre of it was one of his daughters holding out a cage invitingly open, whilst the other was trying to induce the parrot to enter it. But the parrot was very comfortable, and went on offering irrelevant remarks, to the great amusement of the crowd. As soon as its eye lighted upon its noble master, being familiar with his prevailing habit previous to breakfast and dinner, the parrot, cocking its head on one side, said, "Let us pray."

Aug. 1. — Mr. Newdegate in trouble. For new members, and for the strangers in the gallery, Mr. Newdegate is one of the most impressive personages in the House. Merely to watch him rise is to feel a sense that something portentous is about to take place. He uplifts himself with slow, steady motion, as if he were being produced through a trap-door after the occasional manner of entrance of the Ghost of Hamlet's father, or Banquo at Macbeth's table. Being finally drawn to his full length, he stands for a moment dumb, an expression of deepest melancholy settled on his face, whilst dejection is written in every line of his figure.

Thus he appeared this afternoon, and after the customary pause there issued in sepulchral tone the usual remark, "Mr. Speaker." Another pause followed, and then he proceeded with

slowly delivered sentences, sometimes spoken in blood-curdling whisper, and anon (with no particular reference to the sense) uplifted in tones of thunder. It appeared that what Mr. Newdegate had to bewail was what he called "the confiscation of the remaining privileges of independent members," which, being translated, means that, driven into their last ditch, the Government, being obliged to ask the House to sit on a Saturday to take Supply, asked also to be protected against the indulgence of private members in a preliminary series of miscellaneous speeches.

There was evidently more than met the eye in Mr. Newdegate's design. As has been hinted, his appearance on an occasion like this was a matter of course. Also that he should be melancholy was not unforeseen. But never had he been so profoundly moved by some secret sorrow, and members began to pay unwonted attention. Whither was he going with these fixed, sad eyes, this drooping figure, and this red pocket handkerchief, held ready in his right hand lest, peradventure, he should break down and water the back of Mr. Healy's neck with his tears?

Presently, among the lower notes of the wail, the House caught a reference to "the defensive power of the Royal Navy," a subject Mr. Newdegate was pursuing with deepening sadness when the Speaker interposed and observed that his "remarks were not very relevant to the specific motion before the House."

"Sir," said Mr. Newdegate, in a tone of voice with which Cæsar might have prefaced his *Et tu Brute*, "If I trespass I apologise."

He had been sad before, but deeper sorrow whelmed him now. To think that what he might call his co-authority in the House on points of order should raise trivial objections to his discussing the condition of the Navy on a formal motion relating to a Saturday sitting was too much. Still, it was not for him, of all men, to withstand authority. Having apologised, he went on for a few moments, and then paused long enough for several members on both sides to rise in the expectation that he had finished.

"Now," he continued, bringing up a profound sigh and gazing remorsefully at Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, who had risen together. "Now, I was not aware until I saw the letter from the Admiral of the Fleet——"

The Speaker was on his feet in a moment, and Mr. Newdegate, apparently waiting till the cue was taken and the trap-door began to move, slowly sank into his seat.

“The hon. gentleman is distinctly out of order in pursuing that subject,” said the Speaker, with much severity. “It has no relevance to the motion.”

The trap-door silently moved upwards, and there stood Mr. Newdegate once more. No pen could describe the infinite sadness that brooded over his face, the lips down-drawn, the brow contracted, wrinkles showing in fresh places, arms hanging limp at his side, his shoulders bowed, and his knees bent. With a mighty effort he drew himself up to his full height, and addressing the Speaker in a tone wherein asperity was mingled with inextinguishable grief he said:—

“Then, Sir, I most respectfully ask you whether on the Appropriation Bill or on *WHAT* Bill it will be competent to any hon. member to bring this grave subject before the House.” If he had added—“there to be hung by the neck until you are dead, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul,” no one would have felt the solemn personal remark out of place. The Speaker was visibly cowed, and, thus encouraged, Mr. Newdegate, with a fresh wail in his voice, proceeded:—

“It was not until the 21st of this month that the letter of the Admiral of the Fleet——”

Here the House broke in with a roar of laughter, and hilarious cries of “Name, name!” were heard. The Speaker, in a tone which Mr. Warton has learned to fear, said:—

“I have again to ask the hon. gentleman to abstain from that line of discussion, which I have ruled to be out of order.”

“And I, Sir,” said Mr. Newdegate, when the machinery had been got to work again, and he once more slowly rose to full height on the stage, “—and I again apologise.”

Matters were evidently growing dangerous. When a member has thrice been warned from the Chair, the rules of the House direct that he shall be “named” and forthwith suspended. Mr. Newdegate had a duty to perform. The British Navy was somewhere and somehow in danger, and “on the 21st of this month the Admiral of the Fleet had written a letter.” What it was all about no one had the slightest conception. But if they would not be enlightened, their blood

and the letter of the Admiral of the Fleet be upon their heads “I will sit down by putting this question,” said Mr. Newdegate. The question was put, the trap door moved, and Mr. Newdegate deposited on the seat, still holding his blood-red pocket handkerchief in his right hand, sat and brooded over the untold secret of his woe.

Aug. 14. Parliament Prorogued.

### CALENDAR OF THE SESSION.

#### FEBRUARY.

5. Tues.—H. M. Speech. Address thereon. Amendment (Egypt), *Mr. Bourke*. Division — For, 20. Against, 77. Another Amendment, *Mr. MacIver*. Negatived. Debate on Address adjourned. 1st Debate.
6. Wed.—Adjournment of House (Debate on Mr. Bourke's Amendment), *Lord Randolph Churchill*. H. M. Speech. Adjourned Debate resumed. 2nd Debate.
7. Thurs.—H. M. Speech. Adjourned Debate resumed. Amendment (Cattle Disease), *Mr. Chaplin*. Division—For, 200. Against, 251. Debate on Speech adjourned. 3rd Debate.
8. Fri.—H. M. Speech. Amendment (Crimes Act, Ireland), *Mr. Parnell*. Debate adjourned. 4th Debate.
11. Mon.—Parliamentary Oath (Mr. Bradlaugh). Mr. Bradlaugh administered to himself the Oath. Motion, *Sir S. Northcote*. Division—For, 280. Against, 167. Division on Motion, That Mr. Bradlaugh's Vote be disallowed, *Mr. Healy*—For, 258. Against, 161. Adjournment of House (Relief of Sintkat), *Mr. Chaplin*. H. M. Speech. Debate on *Mr. Parnell's* Amendment. 5th Debate.
12. Tues.—Motion for New Writ (Northampton), *Mr. Labouchere*. Vote of Censure (Egypt). Motion, *Sir Stafford Northcote*. 1st Debate. Standing Committees. Motion thereon, *Lord Hartington*. Debate adjourned.
13. Wed.—Middlesex Land Registry Bill, *Sir Hardinge Giffard*. Standing Committees. Motion thereon resumed.
14. Thurs.—Vote of Censure (Egypt). Amendment, *Sir W. Lawson*. 2nd Debate.
15. Fri.—Vote of Censure (Egypt). 3rd Debate.
18. Mon.—Ditto, ditto. 4th Debate.
19. Tues.—Ditto, ditto. 5th Debate. Division thereon—For, 262. Against, 311.
20. Wed.—H. M. Speech. *Mr. Parnell's* Amendment. 6th Debate.
21. Thurs.—Ditto, ditto. 7th Debate.
22. Fri.—Ditto, ditto. 8th Debate. Division — For, 30. Against, 81. Address agreed to. Report of Address. Amendment (Central Asia), *Mr. E. Stanhope*, withdrawn. Report agreed to. Mr. Speaker's Retirement. His Address to the House.
25. Mon.—Mr. Speaker's Retirement. Vote of thanks. Adjournment of House (The Soudan War), *Mr. Labouchere*. Standing Committees. Motion for revival agreed to.
26. Tues.—Mr. Speaker. (Election of Mr. Arthur Peel.)
27. Wed.—Mr. Arthur Peel takes the Chair. Metropolitan Board (Further Powers) Bill. *Sir J. McLaren-Hogg*. Read 2<sup>d</sup>.
28. Thurs.—Representation Bill, Motion for. *Mr. Gladstone*. 1st Debate.
29. Fri.—Supply : Supplementary Estimates.

#### MARCH.

3. Mon.—Adjournment of House (The Soudan War), *Sir Wilfrid Lawson*. Representation Bill, Motion for, agreed to.
4. Tues.—Dwellings in Crowded Districts. Motion, *Mr. A. Balfour*, withdrawn.
5. Wed.—Land Law (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Barry*, Division—For, 72. Against, 235.
6. Thurs.—Supply : Soudan Expedition. Vote for. Considered.
7. Fri.—Army (Commissariat, &c). Motion for Select Committee, *Dr. Cameron*, agreed to.
7. Fri.—Bankruptcy Act (Patronage). Motion, *Mr. Dixon-Hartland*. Division — For, 53. Against, 101.
10. Mon.—Supply : Soudan Expedition. Vote for. Division on Mr. Labouchere's Amendment—For, 18. Against, 178.
11. Tues.—Metropolitan Railway Bill. Committed. (House counted.)
12. Wed.—Copyhold Enfranchisement Bill. *Mr. Waugh*. Committed.
13. Thurs.—Supply : Supplementary Estimates.

## MARCH (continued).

14. *Fri.*—Private Bill Legislation. Motion, *Mr. Craig Sellar*. Negatived. Supply: Supplementary Estimates.

15. *Sat.*—Supply: Motion (Abandonment of the Soudan), *Mr. Ashmead Bartlett*. Division—For, 94. Against, 111. Supplementary Estimates. House rose at 5.45 Sunday morning.

17. *Mon.*—Supply. Army (Term of Service). Motion, *Sir George Campbell*. Negatived. Army Estimates. Statement, *Lord Hartington*. 2 Votes agreed to.

18. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill. 2nd Reading moved, *Mr. Dodson*. House counted at 9 o'clock.

19. *Wed.*—Leaseholders (Facilities, &c.) Bill, *Mr. Broadhurst*. Division on 2nd Reading—For, 104. Against, 168.

20. *Thurs.*—Supply. Marine Artillery. Motion for Select Committee, *Viscount Lewisham*. For, 36. Against, 63. State of Navy. Observations, *Sir J. Hay*. Navy Estimates. Statement, *Mr. C. Bannerman*. 2 Votes agreed to. Civil Service. Vote on account.

21. *Fri.*—House met at 2. Contagious &c. (Animals) Bill. Committed. Bishops (House of Peers). Motion, *Mr. Willis*. Division—For, 137. Against, 148.

24. *Mon.*—Representation Bill. 2nd Reading. Amendment, *Lord J. Manners*. 1st Debate.

25. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Consolidated Fund (I) Bill. Read 3<sup>rd</sup>. Contagious, &c. (Animals) Bill. Committed. Debate adjourned.

26. *Wed.*—Infants' Bill. *Mr. Hopwood*. Committed.

27. *Thurs.*—Representation Bill. 2nd Debate.

28. *Fri.*—Local Taxation. Motion, *Mr. Pell*. Division—For, 208. Against, 197.

31. *Mon.*—Representation Bill. 3rd Debate.

## APRIL.

1. *Tues.*—(Sir A. Otway in the Chair.)—Representation Bill. 4th Debate.

2. *Wed.*—Sale of Intoxicating Liquors (Sunday) Bill. *Mr. Stevenson*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.

3. *Thurs.*—Adjournment of House. Affairs of Egypt, *Sir Stafford Northcote*. Representation Bill. 5th Debate.

4. *Fri.*—Magistracy (Ireland). Motion, *Mr. J. McCarthy*. Division—For, 59. Against, 106.

7. *Mon.*—Representation Bill. 6th Debate. Division—For, 340. Against, 210.

8. *Tues.*—House met at 2. London Government Bill. *Sir W. Harcourt*. Adjournment of House over Easter.

21. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

22. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Contagious, &c. (Animals) Bill. Committee. Convent National Schools (Ireland). Motion, *Mr. Biggar*. Division—For, 44. Against, 71.

23. *Wed.*—Sites for Churches (Ireland) Bill. 2nd Reading. *Col. Nolan*. Division—For, 77. Against, 122.

24. *Thurs.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Mr. Childers*.

25. *Fri.*—House met at 2. Municipal Elections (Corrupt, &c.) Bill. *Sir H. James*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned. Local, &c., Taxation. Motion, *Mr. Hubbard*. Division—For, 35. Against, 73.

28. *Mon.*—Representation Bill. Debate on going into Committee. 1st Debate.

29. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Contagious, &c. (Animals) Bill. Committee. 2nd Sitting. Elementary Schools. Motion, *Mr. Brodrick*. Withdrawn.

30. *Wed.*—Disposal of the Dead Bill. *Dr. Cameron*. Division on 2nd Reading—For, 79. Against, 149.

## MAY.

1. *Thurs.*—Representation Bill. Committed. 2nd Debate.

2. *Fri.*—Morning Sittings ordered till end of June. Parliamentary Election (Hereford). Motion for Select Committee, *Mr. Railles*. Division—For, 55. Against, 107.

Contagious, &c. (Animals) Bill. Committee. 3rd Sitting.

5. *Mon.*—Supply: Army Estimates.

6. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Representation Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting. Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister. Motion, *Mr. Broadhurst*. Division—For, 238. Against, 127.

7. *Wed.*—Liquor Traffic (Scotland) Bill. *Mr. McLellan*. Debate adjourned.

8. *Thurs.*—Supply: Navy Estimates.

9. *Fri.*—House met at 2. Municipal Elections Bill. Committed to the Standing Committee on Law.

12. *Mon.*—Vote of Censure (Soudan). *Sir M. Hicks-Beach*. Debate adjourned.

13. *Tues.*—Ditto, ditto. Division—For, 275. Against, 303.

14. *Wed.*—Channel Tunnel Bill. Division on 2nd Reading—For, 84. Against, 222. Intoxicating Liquors, Sunday (Cornwall) Bill. *Mr. A. Vivian*. Debate adjourned.

15. *Thurs.*—Ways and Means. Committee.

16. *Fri.*—House met at 2. Representation Bill. Committee. 2nd Sitting.

19. *Mon.*—Merchant Shipping Bill. *Mr. Chamberlain*. Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.

20. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Representation Bill. Committee. 3rd Sitting.

21. *Wed.*—Labourers (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Molloy*. Division on 2nd Reading—For, 75. Against, 138.

22. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service. Vote on account.

23. *Fri.*—House met at 2. Representation Bill. Committee. 4th Sitting. Crown Lands. Motion for Select Committee, *Mr. Cheetham*. Counted out.

26. *Mon.*—Representation Bill. Committee. 5th Sitting.

27. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Purchase of Land (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Trevelyan*. Ordered.

## JUNE.

5. *Thurs.*—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.  
 6. *Fri.*—House met at 2. National Debt (Conversion) Bill. Committed.  
 9. *Mon.*—Representation Bill. Committee. 6th Sitting.  
 10. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Ditto. Ditto. 7th Sitting.  
 11. *Wed.*—Ecclesiastical Assessments (Scotland) Bill. *Mr. J. A. Campbell.* Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.  
 12. *Thurs.*—Representation Bill. Committee. 8th Sitting.  
 13. *Fri.*—House met at 2. Representation Bill. Committee. 9th Sitting. War Department. Motion, *Mr. Macfarlane*, negated.  
 16. *Mon.*—Supply : Civil Service Estimates. Education Vote.  
 17. *Tues.*—Representation Bill. Committee. 10th Sitting. Irish Officials. Motion for Select Committee, *Mr. A. O'Connor.* Division—For, 21. Against, 62.  
 18. *Wed.*—Church Patronage Bill. *Mr. E. Leathem.* Committed to a Select Committee.

19. *Thurs.*—Representation Bill. Committee. 11th Sitting. Bill reported.  
 20. *Fri.*—House met at 2. Sale, Intoxicating Liquor, Sunday (Ireland), Bill. *Mr. Trevelyan.* Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.  
 23. *Mon.*—Egypt (Conference). Statement, *Mr. Gladstone.* Representation Bill. Report. 1st Debate.  
 24. *Tues.*—House met at 2. Representation Bill. Report. 2nd Debate. Bill to be read 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
 25. *Wed.*—Cemeteries Bill. *Mr. Richard.* Debate on 2nd Reading adjourned.  
 26. *Thurs.*—Representation Bill. Read 3<sup>rd</sup>. Election Hours of Poll Bill. Committee.  
 27. *Fri.*—Motion regarding the entry that the Representation Bill was read 3<sup>rd</sup>. *new.* *con. Sir S. Northcote.* Division—For, 82. Against, 125. Sale of Intoxicating Liquor, Sunday (Ireland), Bill. Debate adjourned. Crofters, &c. (Scotland). Motion, *Mr. Macfarlane*, withdrawn.  
 30. *Mon.*—Municipal Elections (Corrupt, &c.), Bill. Considered. Police Bill. *Mr. Hibbert.* Committed.

## JULY.

1. *Tues.*—Public Health (Metropolis). Small Pox. Motion, *Dr. Cameron.* House counted.  
 2. *Wed.*—Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill. *Mr. Gray.* Committed.  
 3. *Thurs.*—Adjournment of House. Crew of the "Nisero." *Mr. Storey.* London Government Bill. 2nd Reading. 1st Debate.  
 4. *Fri.*—House met at 2. Priority to Government Orders on Tuesdays. London Government Bill. 2nd Reading. 2nd Debate. Mining Industry. Motion, *Mr. Burt*, negated.  
 7. *Mon.*—Supply : Army Estimates.  
 8. *Tues.*—London Government Bill. 2nd Reading. 3rd Debate.  
 9. *Wed.*—Private Bill Legislation. New Standing Order.  
 10. *Thurs.*—Public Business. Statement, *Mr. Gladstone.* Supply : Civil Service Estimates.

11. *Fri.*—Adjournment of House. Representation Bill. Compromise, *Lord R. Churchill.* Supply : Motion, Half-past 12 o'clock Rule, *Mr. Monk.* House counted.  
 14. *Mon.*—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.  
 15. *Tues.*—Supply : Standing Order 27, November, 1882, extended to Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Supply : Navy Estimates.  
 16. *Wed.*—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.  
 17. *Thurs.*—Ditto, ditto.  
 18. *Fri.*—East Indian Medical Service. Motion, *Mr. Gibson*, negated. Supply : Civil Service Estimates.  
 21. *Mon.*—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.  
 22. *Tues.*—Ditto, ditto.  
 23. *Wed.*—Ditto, ditto.  
 24. *Thurs.*—Ditto, ditto.  
 25. *Fri.*—Ditto, ditto.  
 28. *Mon.*—Ditto : Army and Navy Estimates.  
 29. *Tues.*—Ditto : Civil Service Estimates.  
 30. *Wed.*—Ditto, ditto.  
 31. *Thurs.*—Ditto, ditto.

## AUGUST.

1. *Fri.*—National School Teachers (Ireland). Motion, *Mr. J. McCarthy.* Division—For, 61. Against, 63.  
 2. *Sat.* Ditto, ditto. Egypt (The Conference). Statement, *Mr. Gladstone.* Motion for Committee of Supply on Monday next.  
 4. *Mon.*—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.  
 5. *Tues.*—Supply : Vote for relief of General Gordon. Division—For, 174. Against, 14. Ditto : Civil Service Estimates.

6. *Wed.*—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.  
 7. *Thurs.*—Ditto, ditto.  
 8. *Fri.*—East India, Financial Statement, *Mr. J. K. Cross.*  
 9. *Sat.*—Appropriation Bill. Observations on insufficiency of Navy, *Mr. Newdegate.* Bill read 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
 11. *Mon.*—Appropriation Bill. Amendment (Egypt), Earl of Northbrook, *Sir S. Northcote.* Bill committed.  
 12. *Tues.*—Appropriation Bill. Observations, *Lord R. Churchill.* Bill read 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
 14. *Thurs.*—Prorogation.

## SESSION 1884-1885.

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### CHAPTER XXXII.

#### THE FIRST VOTE OF CENSURE.

On the Eve of a Great Division—Rupture of the Fourth Party—Sir H. Wolff's Reflections—The Quarrel with the Lords—The First Vote of Censure—Mr. Forster sees the Mote in Mr. Courtney's Eye—Three Deserters—Preparations for the Division—The Two Streams—The Closure—Mr. Biggar on Art—One Hundred and Thirty-seven Questions!—Sir Pat O'Brien takes the Floor—The Leader of the Opposition—Mr. Ashmead Bartlett in Peril—A Forecast.

Oct. 23. New session opened.

Dec. 7.—On the eve of a great division.

The world presents few sights more moving than the House of Commons, crowded to its utmost capacity, awaiting the issue of a great division. Thus it was on the stroke of one o'clock this morning, whilst Lord Hartington was winding up the debate on the second reading of the Franchise Bill. Every seat on the floor of the House was filled, and members sat on the steps of the gangway, whence, from time to time, they were walked over by others coming and going. A throng stood at the Bar, and discussed the probabilities of the division. The gallery opposite the Treasury bench was crammed with members in double row, the gallery immediately opposite being only less filled.

Rupture of the Fourth Party.

The appearance of the House at this time was in strong contrast with that it had presented during the long hours of the sitting. Just before dinner the news that Lord Randolph Churchill was on his legs with his foot on the prostrate body of Mr. Gorst had temporarily filled the benches. Yesterday Mr. Gorst delivered a speech in which he, with conspicuous ability, enforced the views of the duty of the Conservative party at the present juncture which at a corre-

sponding crisis in last Session Lord Randolph had openly avowed. It might have been thought that the member for Chatham would have received the thanks of his leader for this admirable exposition. It was therefore with the greater pain he found himself an object of reproach and attack. It was an affecting spectacle as, in view of the full House, Lord Randolph stood with his shoulder turned towards his former counsellor what time he withered him with reproaches and lashed him with rebuke. It was more than Sir Henry Wolff could bear at close quarters. For years he had known these two, had shared their private consultation, and had taken part in their public demonstrations. They were so few that, if divided, the residue on either hand would be infinitesimally small. This was not the first time the impetuosity of the leader had shaken the party to its foundations and broken away one of its pillars.

On this same question of procedure on the Reform Bill Mr. Balfour had been driven out of the party. It was true that he had been estranged by Lord Randolph taking exactly the opposite view to that he now advocated. This had its recommendation as proving the absolute fairness and well-balanced character of the noble lord's mind. If he got rid of twenty-five per cent, of his party because it denied the right of the House of Lords to stand in the way of passing the Franchise Bill, and if he quarrelled with another twenty-five per cent. whilst affirming that right, one episode might be taken as balancing the other, leaving Lord Randolph safe in a broadly based and impregnable position.

Sir H. Wolff's Still, where was this to end? With Mr. Balfour reflections gone and Mr. Gorst going, there remained only one faithful adherent who might at any moment, through no fault of his own, be placed in a similar position, and might live to hear himself accused before a crowded House of having "a purely legal mind," and of "prostrating himself before the Prime Minister," or of corresponding failings suitable to his character and to any fresh turn Lord Randolph might take in his policy. It was well to be out of such complications. So Sir Henry Wolff sought a seat at the remoter end of the bench, and there, with arms folded, hat tilted over his nose, and a severe

expression over his face indicating absolute impartiality, he sat and listened.

The quarrel with the Lords. Lord Hartington made a very able speech, infused with more liveliness than habitually marks his deliverances. But all the House wanted to know was whether he had anything fresh to say pointing to a settlement of the quarrel with the Lords. When he seemed to touch the fringe of this question, a sudden change came over the aspect of the House. Conversation was hushed, heads were bent forward, and profound silence reigned. When he wandered away, even to his smart chaff of Lord Randolph, attention fell off, and eyes were turned towards the clock. After Lord Hartington sat down there was only the question to be put before the House was cleared for a division. Lord Kensington and Mr. Thornhill, telling for the amendment, came in with the figures at eight minutes to one. Still the crowd poured in from the other side in a stream that never seemed to end, and still Lord Richard Grosvenor and Mr. Winn tarried. It was known that the majority must be large. But no one fixed it so high as it proved, and when it was announced that the second reading had been carried by a majority of 140, a deafening cheer, renewed again and again, went up from the Liberal host.

Feb. 24. — The Ostensibly the principal business upon which Closure. the House of Commons has been engaged since the Session was resumed is the Vote of Censure on the Egyptian policy of the Government. Actually, the event which has attracted the fullest measure of public attention is the application of the Closure, which took place to-night after a succession of violent scenes. As frequently happens in Parliamentary history, the uproar suddenly burst forth out of proceedings in themselves eminently dull. The Vote of Censure debate opened yesterday, taking precedence by favour of a special order of the House, which postponed the Orders of the day till the question had been discussed. By what fatality or fatuity the Prime Minister, in submitting this resolution last night, did not make it extend to the full course of the debate on the Vote of Censure has not yet been explained. There is no standing order which would have prevented his so framing his motion

that there would have been no necessity to renew it with special reference to to-night. This simple device was neglected, and it accordingly became necessary when the House met to-day to move that notices of motion be postponed till after the Order of the Day for the debate on the Vote of Censure.

This gave an opening for obstruction which the Irish members were not slow to avail themselves of. That the attempt was deliberately planned was evident. After Mr. Gladstone's motion of yesterday was carried, Mr. Redmond, perceiving that it did not apply to to-day, placed upon the notice paper a motion with respect to Inspector Murphy of the Irish Constabulary. He had full choice of place on the Order book, for, as every one knew, it was intended to take to-night for the Vote of Censure, no private member had been at the useless trouble of filling the notice paper. Having thus established a *locus standi*, Mr. Redmond presented himself when the motion to take precedence was submitted, and declared that this was another attempt on the part of a tyrannical Government and a hostile House of Commons to suppress Irish rights in Parliament.

Mr. Redmond was at one time a paid servant of the House of Commons, and more especially under the direction of the Speaker. He seems now to take delight, possible to some natures, in openly and continuously insulting those with whom a strange stroke of fortune has placed him on a footing of nominal equality. Very early in his speech he sinned against the rule which limits the debate on a motion such as the Premier's. The Speaker promptly called him to order, an interference which Mr. Redmond insolently acknowledged with mock deference meant to be exceedingly cutting. The Speaker took no notice, till presently he again strayed out of the paths of order, when he gravely recalled him, and again a third time. Mr. Redmond knows that the Speaker is not to be trifled with, and, having now exhausted his opportunities of safely outraging order, he resumed his seat.

Mr. Redmond being shut up, there were plenty to follow, and they came in dull procession, only Mr. Redmond junior succeeding in varying the monotony of verbosity. This fantastic youth, being called to order by the Speaker for irrelevant discussion of Dublin Castle, pertly answered—

“I am glad to hear, Mr. Speaker, that the question of

Dublin Castle is irrelevant.” Up rose the Speaker, not hurriedly, but with a promptness that distinguishes him at crises.

“I must ask the hon. member to discontinue his speech,” he sternly said, whereupon, the courage of this Parliamentary Bob Acres oozing out at his fingers’ ends, he humbly retired, and was seen and heard no more till, the uproar recommencing, he might with personal safety bellow at the Speaker and howl at Mr. Gladstone.

About this time, it occurring to the orderly mind of Mr. Arthur O’Connor that there was no amendment before the House, he moved one to the effect that Mr. Redmond’s motion be excepted from the rule proposed by the Prime Minister—that is to say, that the case of Inspector Murphy should be argued forthwith—and if there were any time left towards midnight, then Mr. Goschen might make his speech on the Vote of Censure. One effect of this was to afford an opportunity to the Parnellites who had already spoken to begin afresh. Hitherto they had been speaking to the Premier’s resolution. Now they might address themselves to Mr. Arthur O’Connor’s amendment. Two of them rising with that intention, the Speaker felt the hour had come. He rose and said—

“It is my duty to inform the House that I consider this subject has been adequately discussed, and that it is the evident sense of the House that the question shall now be put.”

Here was the Closure at last, a powerful instrument, forged with infinite care and trouble, and permitted through two years and a half to lie useless in the armoury. Every one was taken by surprise, the brief silence being broken by a howl of rage and despair by the Parnellites. Mr. Gladstone was plainly taken aback. He knew that, as leader of the House, the next move was with him. But what was he to do? He seized the copy of the Standing Orders which lay on the table, and hurriedly ran through the pages in search of instructions. Meanwhile the Parnellites lashed themselves into wilder paroxysms. Mr. O’Brien, half rising, hissed through clenched teeth,

“We will remember this in Ireland.” The Speaker rose, but no one paid him attention. Through the uproar his voice was heard exclaiming,

“Mr. O’Brien, I name you as disregarding the authority of the Chair.”

"Ah, ah!" "Oh, oh!" yelled the Parnellites. "Name away! name away!"

Mr. Gladstone was still hunting after the Standing Order relating to the Closure when he found himself faced by a fresh task. But he had had sufficient practice in the matter of naming a member, and quite promptly came to the table to move that Mr. O'Brien be suspended from the service of the House. His appearance was hailed by a fresh outburst of yelling and howling. The Speaker rose to put the question, and was faced by Mr. Sexton, who jumped up from the midst of the seething mass below the gangway.

"I rise to order," Mr. Sexton roared, with hand to mouth.

"There is no debate on this question," answered the Speaker.

"Point of order, point of order!" yelled the Parnellites, throwing themselves about the benches as if possessed of devils.

After an interval, the uproar always continuing, Mr. Sexton submitted his point of order, which was that the Speaker had not named Mr. O'Brien with the full formula. The Speaker declared he had, and proceeded to put the question—"That Mr. O'Brien be suspended." A division was challenged, and the motion was carried by 244 votes against 20. Mr. O'Brien had boldly voted for himself, and returned to the House to hear the result of the division.

"The member for Mallow will now withdraw," said the Speaker.

"Certainly, Mr. Speaker," replied the member for Mallow, "with far more pleasure than ever I entered the House," at which courteous retort the Parnellites nearly died of laughter.

It might have been thought that this was sufficient for a single sitting. But more and stranger scenes were to follow. Mr. Gladstone, reverting to the earlier and more important action of the Speaker, now moved the Closure resolution, "That the question be now put." The Speaker unaccountably put the question that Mr. O'Connor's amendment to the resolution giving precedence to the debate on the Vote of Censure should become the substantive motion. Hereupon disorder broke out afresh in the Irish camp. There was evidently a conspiracy against Irish liberty which must be grappled with. But the House had already been cleared for a division. The bells

were clanging through all the passages, and members were trooping in. At such a juncture no one may address the Speaker, except remaining seated with his hat on. Under this disadvantage half a dozen Irish members began to shout at the Speaker. But as they had been doing that for the last twenty minutes no particular notice was taken of them. Mr. Gorst executed a strategic movement on to the front Opposition bench, where, remaining seated and wearing his hat, he called Mr. Speaker's attention to the error. Finding no chance of being heard from below the gangway, Mr. Parnell imitated Mr. Gorst's tactics, got down to the front Opposition bench, and supported Mr. Gorst's objection. Eventually the question was put in due form, and the House divided on the Closure resolution.

The result was safe enough if the Parnellites were left to themselves. If they could not muster forty it would require only a hundred to carry the motion; but with over forty there must be two hundred on the other side. Everything rested with the Conservatives, and there was much anxiety as to which way they would go. In the end it was found that they went all ways. Some (including Sir Hardinge Giffard) voted with the Parnellites in affront to the Speaker's last stand for order and authority, more walked out of the House, and a few voted in support of the Speaker. The motion was thus carried by the bare majority of 207 against 46. After two more divisions, being all the Parnellites could possibly extract from the situation, the scene closed, and at a few minutes to eight, the time originally fixed by the Parnellites, the debate on the Vote of Censure was resumed.

Feb. 28. — The first vote of John Manners resumed his seat, and the weary censure. succession of speeches on the Vote of Censure happily ended. Things had gone better through the night than had been anticipated. There had been threats of a repetition of the disgraceful scene of Tuesday night. But in the House of Commons it is the unexpected that happens, and, after a courteous conversation between Mr. Parnell and Mr. Gladstone, quite in the old-fashioned Parliamentary style, the clouds cleared, and Sir M. H. Beach, much to his surprise, found himself shortly after six o'clock continuing the debate. It had

gone through the night with varying fortunes ; sometimes with full benches, as when Mr. Courtney was demonstrating the errors of the Government and his own infallibility ; sometimes with empty benches, as when Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice industriously went over again the old, old story, written in Blue Books. Mr. Forster lifted the debate to the highest pitch of interest and excitement. Never has the member for Bradford spoken with greater ability or effect. His speech was evidently carefully prepared, for at times he recited whole sentences from his notes. But his manner was brighter than it sometimes is.

Mr. Forster sees  
the mote in  
Mr. Courtney's  
eye.

There was, indeed, something unusually dramatic about his delivery, with his pointed gestures towards members whom he happened to be discussing, and his little asides, one of which suggested the existence of a hitherto unsuspected fund of humour. Nothing could have been happier or fuller of comedy than his sly hit at the rival attraction of the evening.

“ My hon. friend,” he said, turning to Mr. Courtney, “ is a man of eloquence, a man of great sincerity, and of great knowledge.”

Mr. Courtney held down his head and blushed, whilst a pleased smile wreathed his lips. These things were true. But truth was not always told in the market place. Still gazing upon him, with hand outstretched, with gesture of paternal blessing, Mr. Forster went on to say—

“ He also believes that he has even more knowledge than he possesses,” at which unexpected blow, going straight home to his little foible, the smile faded from Mr. Courtney’s lips, and all around the crowded benches up to the galleries where the peers sat the front line of a throng of strangers, a simultaneous burst of laughter filled the House. Mr. Courtney, in the course of his speech, had conveyed the impression that whilst Ministers were more than fallible, and the House of Commons not always to be trusted, there was one guide who knew every turning of the most intricate path, and who, if he had been trusted, would have prevented all that was now lamented. Mr. Forster, in completely disposing of Mr. Courtney’s claim to the unique position, triumphantly established his own.

**Three deserters.** Mr. Gladstone sat on the Treasury bench through this speech, with head reclining on the back of the bench and eyes closed. Perhaps he was listening to Mr. Forster, or, peradventure, was meditating on the oddity of the coincidence, that in this hour of peril there were ranged against him three old colleagues widely divided on other subjects. Mr. Goschen, when the Ministry was formed, had stood aloof because he was not at one with them on the question of extension of the franchise. Mr. Forster had quitted the Ministry on the question of Irish government; and Mr. Courtney had withdrawn his powerful support because the Premier could not master the intricacies of the system of proportional representation. Yet Mr. Goschen, Mr. Forster, and Mr. Courtney were all agreed that Ministers were hopelessly wrong on Egyptian policy, Mr. Courtney even rising superior to the fact that he had been a member of the Ministry through all the years during which that policy had been engendered and put into practice.

**Preparations for the division.** Lord John Manners was commendably brief, and amid a sigh of satisfaction the Speaker rose to put the question. It was lengthy in itself, and the preliminaries of the division would occupy at least ten minutes. Other members might find the interval too anxious and exciting to attempt to fill it up with serious work. The fate of the most powerful Ministry of modern days hung trembling in the balance. There were persistent rumours which pointed to defeat. At best the majority must be critically small. To sit and wait with bated breath till the issue was announced seemed to members on both sides of the House the only thing to be done. It was otherwise with the man most nearly concerned. Mr. Gladstone had yet left undone his nightly task of reporting to the Queen a summary account of the proceedings in the House. Here was a favourable opportunity whilst the Speaker read the resolution, whilst the bells clanged through all the passages, and whilst members came trooping in till checked by the surging mass they had themselves helped to form. So Mr. Gladstone, taking ink and paper, and carefully selecting a pen, opened his blotting pad on his knee, and began his record. In a quarter of an hour he would have the opportunity of resuming and concluding it. How would it finish ?

The Premier seemed speedily to reach that portion of the missive where it would be necessary to know the conclusion of the drama now being enacted before proceeding further. He shut up the letter in the pad, and resting it on his knees, turned and looked with troubled face at the gathering throng at the Bar. Mr. Goschen and Mr. Forster earnestly talked together from their corner seats behind the Treasury bench. The side galleries, ten minutes earlier thronged with members, were now emptied, their occupants streaming down into the narrow passage by the doorway, materially helping to block it up. The sand had run out in the glass on the table, the Speaker was on his feet waiting to put the question, and it was time the doors leading from the lobby were closed. But it was in vain the attendants tried to do their duty. The dense mass standing at the Bar blocked up the passage, so that those struggling in from the lobby could find no room to move. By main force the doors were slowly shut, one excited member losing his hat as he just squeezed through the doorway. He was temporarily parted from his hat by the closed doors. But he had gained the opportunity to vote, and might decide the fortunes of the day.

The Speaker read over again with undiminished emphasis the prodigious sentence in which the censure lay hid as it were amid the folds of a wet blanket. There reigned through the crowded house a dead silence, members listening as if they had never before heard the resolution or Mr. Morley's amendment, which it was proposed to substitute for it.

"The question I have to put," said the Speaker in solemn tones, "is that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question. As many as are of that opinion say 'Aye.'"

A shout of "Aye!" from the crowded benches to the left.

"The contrary, 'No!'"

A roar of "No!" from the right.

"The 'Noes' have it," said the Speaker.

The "Ayes" have it shouted the Opposition; and then slowly the crowd began to empty into the division lobbies.

**The two streams.** Mr. Gladstone went first, carrying his pad with him. Just after he had crossed the gangway on the Ministerial side Mr. Forster and Mr. Goschen stepped down, and turning to the left, went out to vote for the dismissal

of the Government. The Irish members played over again a childish game, not particularly striking when it was invented. They remained seated till the last moment, and then, at a signal, rose with theoretic precision, and marched out to give their solid vote to the Conservative party. Slowly the two streams returned, one by the doorway under the clock, the other from behind the Speaker's chair. Sir Charles Dilke was, as usual, the first to enter, and was presently joined by Mr. Chamberlain, with whom he cheerfully chatted. When Mr. Gladstone arrived he was drawn into the conversation. But it did not seem to suit his mood. He drew a little aside, and, with the blotting pad containing his unfinished letter held with clenched hands on his knee, he sat leaning forward watching the two streams slowly entering from the other side.

It seemed a long, long time before the end came. At last Mr. Winn and Lord Richard Grosvenor were discovered fighting their way through the throng at the Bar, and simultaneously Lord Kensington and Mr. Thornhill came at hurried pace from behind the Speaker's chair. The loud murmur of conversation ceased, and amid dead silence the figures were reported to the Clerk. Before the paper was handed out it was known which way the vote had gone, Lord Richard Grosvenor moving to the right, and evidently prepared to take the paper. It was handed to him, and a sudden deafening cheer went up from the Liberal ranks, betokening the deep anxiety with which the issue had been awaited. When the figures were read out showing a majority of fourteen in a House of 590 members cheers and counter cheers filled the Chamber.

It was only fourteen, but it was safety, and Mr. Gladstone went on writing his interrupted letter.

Mar. 5.—Mr. Biggar on art. It is striking evidence of the capriciousness of the House of Commons that whilst it will listen with pleasure to Mr. Biggar on the fine arts, it will not at any price hear Mr. William Redmond on universities. When to-night Mr. Biggar interposed to state his views on the subject of the Ansidei Madonna there was apparent that quick movement of interest which is the highest tribute the House pays to an orator.

The debate had proceeded to considerable length before a new authority interposed. It is characteristic of this remarkable man that he should wait till the whole of the evidence was submitted before expressing a judgment. Even when he did so, he was clothed in modest terms, which some of his friends might well imitate. He had his opinion upon the point at issue, which simply was whether the Ansidei Madonna was worth £70,000 offered for it by her Majesty's Government. So men would have immediately blurted out this opinion. Mr. Biggar, with consideration for the feelings and views of others, however mistaken they might be, put the matter so delicately,

"Sir Arthur Otway—Sir," he said, disposing his left thumb in the armhole of his waistcoat, and with his right commanding attention from the hushed Senate, "I feel disposed to doubt the accuracy of the statement that this here £70,000 picture is genuine."

Here was no harsh, dogmatic statement. There was no "I am sure," or "There is no doubt." Mr. Biggar only "felt disposed to" question a statement, and if any gentleman would prove its accuracy his mind was quite open to conviction. To again, note the strong common sense that pervaded his utterance. Many members who were about to vote national money for this object had never seen the picture. Mr. Biggar had probably from earliest days, been familiar with the proverb warning against "buying a pig in a poke." The suggestion had to offer to the House was simple in the extreme. Let them bring the picture down and exhibit it in the tea room, so that members might judge for themselves whether it was worth the money.

"We ought," said Mr. Biggar, persuasively, "to see the article before we buy it."

Mar. 6.—One hundred and thirty-seven questions were set down upon the House of Commons Orders to-night. A record special taken shows that 58 additional questions arising out of those printed were sprung upon Ministers. This brings the number up to 120, increased by 17 questions put without notice of any kind, and coming in at the end of the printed list.

making a total of 137 questions, very few of which rose above the level of parochial interest. One hour and a half was occupied in putting and answering questions, which with the hour appropriated for discussion by the Irish members of the formal appointment of a Committee brought the House close up to the dinner hour before public business was commenced.

Mar. 12.—Sir Pat  
O'Brien takes  
the floor.

Sir Patrick O'Brien is the one relic left to the House of the old-fashioned Irish member. He has been in the House these thirty-two years, uninterruptedly sitting for King's County. It is possible that this may be his last Parliament. Sir Patrick, with all his eccentricities, has had the firmness to decline to bow the knee to Mr. Parnell, and is therefore doomed. He is evidently determined that if the remainder of his Parliamentary life be short it shall be merry, and has of late developed a tendency to talk as frequently as Mr. Sexton or Mr. Healy.

There is no doubt that the hon. baronet when he rises to address the House has some clear intention in his mind. Supposing, as happened to-night, that the subject matter under discussion be a vote for the salaries of the National school teachers in Ireland, Sir Patrick will think he has something to say about National school teachers, and indeed starts from that basis. But a look, a laugh, an ironical cheer from his countrymen opposite, sends him off in quite a new direction. The phrase Irish National teachers suggests to him that the Parnellites are fond of assuming that they are the National party, whereupon the deep-throated "Hear, hear!" of Mr. Healy is heard. Sir Patrick fixes his wandering eye upon Mr. Healy, and remarks that "if he were to ask him what the word national meant, no doubt with his acute intellect he would say that a great deal depended upon the definition of the word." Whilst the House is wondering what on earth this Bunsbyan echo means, Mr. W. Redmond brings himself into notice, and Sir Patrick is off again.

"Assuming that to be correct," he says—and no one in the House can contradict him—"am I wrong in saying that the hon. member for Wexford (Mr. W. Redmond) is begging the whole question?"

This is getting worse and worse. The bewildered House can only laugh, and amid the laughers the flashing eye of the now

excited baronet lights upon Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and instant he falls upon him. Mr. O'Connor is understood to write t Parliamentary letter in the *Freeman's Journal*, and seems have gone the length of asserting that Sir Patrick is general unintelligible. This has rankled in the hon. baronet's breast and the barb throbs when he sees Mr. O'Connor laughing. : he "goes for him" in the following scathing passage :

"As the modern Plutarch, who writes in the *Freeman's Journal*, says that I am generally unintelligible, of course a Plutarch at ten guineas a week must be a much greater man than the Greek Plutarch."

Mr. W. Redmond has only a dim notion of who or what Plutarch may be. He has seen the name somewhere, probab in an advertisement of a new sauce or an infallible liniment. Whatever it be, it is clear that it has nothing to do with the vot so he seizes the opportunity of bringing himself into prominence by asking the Chairman whether the hon. baronet is in order in th allusion. Sir Arthur Otway gently suggests that perhaps the hon. baronet will be able to address himself more directly to the que tion before the Chair. The hon. baronet will do so. But in th meantime the presumptuous ignoramus whom Wexford has r turned to the House at the bidding of Mr. Parnell is not to escap

"Humble animal as I am," said Sir Patrick, thrusting one hand into his pocket, and waving the other contemptuous towards the Parnellite camp, "I am not about to assume the character of a lion. But if I were to do so, my jackal in the House would be the hon. member for Wexford (Mr. W. Redmond Because," Sir Patrick adds, feeling the necessity of explainin this metaphor, "I scarcely ever speak without his calling out 'Order !'"

Here the Chairman once more interposed, and Sir Patrick went back to the national teachers. But in a few moments he was away again, blindly buffeting the enemy. On more than one occasion he has blundered into an effective denunciation of members who take the money of the Irish servant girls and labour in the United States. Seeing these gentlemen opposite grinnin at him there came into his mind (as naturally arising out of the question of the status of national school teachers in Ireland), recollection of these pecuniary relations.

"All persons in Ireland," he said, "whether Orangeman

or Nationalists, or Whigs or Protestants, or members of the Faith, if any faith were left in the country, or whether they belong to that still larger number which is waiting upon Providence, waiting to see whether the wind will always blow from the west across the Atlantic—all these ought to unite in promoting education."

And then, in a dimly grand passage, feeling the spirit of prophecy upon him, Sir Patrick uplifted his strident voice, and cried aloud,

"The wind may possibly blow across the Atlantic in a way very unpleasant for some people, notwithstanding the grand vertebræ and the big faces that I have so often heard thrown in the teeth of the Irish race."

This was a point at which, had Sir Patrick been a trained orator, he would have resumed his seat, leaving the audience lost in amazement. But Sir Patrick is a child of nature. He utters the words that come to his lips, in whatsoever order or disorder they may tumble up, and he went stumbling along, stopping here and there to knock on the head some obtrusive Parnellite, called to order again and again by the Chairman, and finally pathetically begging pardon if he had used expressions he ought not to have used, excusing himself on the ground that he was surrounded, as far as he could be, by a something which came across the House—an atmosphere of Nationalism by which he was half suffocated, "and in that condition, as people do, he used words with dangerous freedom."

Mar. 19. — The leader of the Opposition. Sir Stafford Northcote still sits upon the front Opposition bench, and with folded arms and bowed head listens to what goes forward. Nominally he is the leader of the Opposition, and sometimes, though not often, he puts a question in that capacity. But the real leader just now is Mr. Ashmead Bartlett. The rise of this gentleman within the last fortnight is a remarkable incident. It is five years now since he first presented himself from a back seat below the gangway, and made a direct personal attack upon Mr. Gladstone, which instantly attracted attention. The position thus rapidly assumed excited laughter, and that is an accompaniment which has since rarely failed to greet his appearances. It is only about two years ago that both political parties

on an idle night joined in playing a practical joke upon him. He had succeeded in finding opportunity one Friday night of bringing on an amendment on going into Committee of Supply. He had smuggled into the House that indefinite quantity of water which is indispensable when making a long speech. There was a necessity upon the Government to keep a House, in order to obtain a vote in Supply. Otherwise, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett would have been promptly disposed of by a count out. As it was, he had the House at his mercy, and was evidently not disposed to be merciful.

**Mr. Ashmead Bartlett in peril.** He spoke on this occasion from the bench immediately behind the Conservative leaders, and exactly over his head was one of the heavy ornamental pendants that skirt the glass roof. Some member on the benches opposite, reclining in vain attempt to find ease, accidentally fixed his eye upon this pendant. Another member, observing his glance, also looked up. The infection spread, and presently every member of the house was intently staring at the point immediately over the orator's head. Mr. Ashmead Bartlett began to grow uneasy in the presence of this singular demonstration ; observing which members stared the more intently, whispering to each other, and assuming a look of frightened expectation. After struggling for some minutes, Mr. Ashmead Bartlett could no longer stand the silent terror of the situation. He looked up, observed the pendant pointing directly to the crown of his head, and, taking up his glasses of water, moved down the bench, amid a roar of laughter from members, as pleased as a lot of schoolboys with the success of their practical joke.

If the occasion recurred in this or other form, there is no doubt that now as then the Conservative members would be ready to join in "having a lark with Ashmead Bartlett." They laugh at him still, and in private conversation freely express their opinion of him. But of late they have taken him under their protection, and the Liberals, laughing and chaffing as usual when he rises for the fourth or fifth time, are astonished to find the Conservatives shouting them down with cries of "Order!" Mr. Ashmead Bartlett is, of course, pleased and encouraged by this unwonted approval. But, as a matter of fact, it is rather a demonstration against Sir Stafford Northcote

than one in favour of the member for Eye. The Conservative party, after a brief struggle, gave themselves up to the leadership of Lord Randolph Churchill, and gladly followed him when he dashed ahead of the feeble leadership of the front bench. But Lord Randolph Churchill, with all his recklessness, is a man of sterling ability, and has a pretty clear notion whither he is steering. Mr. Ashmead Bartlett is, I venture to say, a much cleverer man than he is generally accredited; but Conservative gentlemen have not yet schooled themselves into the discipline of following him. Lord Randolph Churchill, even if he did not on other points soar far beyond the member for Eye, is the son of a duke, and therefore, and to that extent, a heaven-born leader. What they find useful and agreeable in Mr. Ashmead Bartlett is an opportunity for striking a side blow at the patient, grey, sad-visaged man who sits on the front Opposition bench, and still carries the title of leader.

Mr. Ashmead Bartlett is the very opposite of Sir Stafford Northcote. The latter, born amid earlier and better traditions of Parliamentary life, and oppressed by considerations of fair fighting and concern for the interests of the country as occasionally opposed to the interests of party, will not night after night badger Ministers with questions on delicate subjects of foreign policy. Mr. Ashmead Bartlett will, and does; and when he rises to put a question which the Prime Minister declines to answer, and adds that he does not think it ought to have been put, they, in cheering him, feel that they are hissing their titular leader, whose spirit never rises to heights like this.

*A forecast.* Such a condition of affairs promises only one thing. It is impossible for a man, even as long-suffering as Sir Stafford Northcote, indefinitely to hold the anomalous position in which he has been thrust. Since the present Parliament met he and the party have pulled further and further apart. It began on the Bradlaugh business, when the temper of the party, but just defeated at the poll, manifested itself. Lord Randolph Churchill, either by closer sympathy or by clearer acumen, was then able to decide upon a course which Sir Stafford Northcote found it impossible to follow. It proved in the end that Lord Randolph was the

trne leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, and that Sir Stafford Northcote had little sympathy with them. Since then things have gone from bad to worse. Sir Stafford Northcote is openly flouted in the House, is deserted in the division lobby, and a man like Mr. Ashmead Bartlett is used as the stick wherewith to beat him.' If at the next general election the Conservatives were certain to come in with a majority, the situation would be cleared up. Sir Stafford would be gently but firmly transported to the refuge of political failures—the House of Lords ; and Lord Randolph Churchill, with perhaps an interval of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, would lead the House of Commons, and would really be captain of the Conservative party. But there is little fear that the Conservatives will find themselves in a majority in the new Parliament. It is also certain that either Sir Stafford Northcote will not, in a new Parliament, be able any longer to stand the affronts daily put upon him, or that the patience of the Conservative party with their titular leader will be exhausted. But it is pitiful to think of a man of Sir Stafford Northcote's great abilities, high personal character, wide experience, and long service to the State retiring into comparative obscurity, whilst a younger man is preferred in his place.

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### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### THE PENJDEH INCIDENT.

The Premier Missing—The Major—The Vote of Credit—A Critical Question—  
A Dislocated Telegram—“The King has gone to Pot”—Lord Palmerston Hung—Painful Scene in the Lords.

Apr. 9.—The intelligent foreigner looking down upon the  
Premier mis- House of Commons from the distinguished  
sing. strangers' gallery to-night, must have had his  
general opinion of the singularity of the English people greatly  
strengthened. Disclosure was made of a critical step on a road  
that may lead to the most momentous war of modern time ; and  
the few members present listened with as little outward sign of

emotion as if the communication of the Prime Minister related to the business arrangements of the following week. Not more than sixty or seventy members were sparsely scattered over the benches, and though this was an accident due to the holidays, and had no direct bearing upon the incident of the day, it added to the oddness of the situation. The House is crowded to its utmost limits to see Dr. Kenealy introduced, or Mr. Bradlaugh dismissed ; and when the Prime Minister approaches the table to deliver a message fraught with issues of peace or war, his words echo around empty benches.

Yet the scene was not without its dramatic power, by reason of the very simplicity and unpreparedness of its arrangement. At the outset the Premier was not anywhere to be found. Sir William Harcourt—one of the few Ministers present—had quitted him at half-past four, when the Cabinet Council had come to an end. It was now twenty minutes to five. The questions on the paper had been run through with unexpected celerity. The Premier's turn had come, and his place was empty. In a little while his opportunity would have passed by, the House would be in Committee, and till progress were reported, at some unknown hour of the night, Sir Stafford Northcote would have no opportunity of putting the question which he was threatening to explode on the front Opposition bench.

A slight movement announced the arrival of the Premier, who hurried towards his seat, skirting the ponderous figure of Sir William Harcourt, who was on his legs endeavouring to pass away the time and delay the inevitable moment when the Orders of the Day must be called on. But there was no cheering then or when the Premier appeared at the table in response to Sir Stafford Northcote's inquiry. The only truculent thing anywhere about was the great red rose in the Premier's coat, with its leaves awry as if it had already been in battle.

It was a great opportunity for a man of theatrical instincts. It was known beyond doubt that the Russians, in the face of solemn engagement, had broken the truce, attacked the Afghans, slaughtered them in hundreds, and driven them out of their stronghold. The Stock Exchange was in a panic. The crowded streets throbbed with the news. The Premier in his hurried passage from Downing Street to the House must have made

his way through the crowd that patiently stood at the gates of Palace Yard hoping to hear something new. What a speech the great orator might have made on this historic occasion!

But the duties of the statesman left no scope for the display of oratory, and nothing could be balder or more matter-of-fact than the brief address Mr. Gladstone delivered amid the breathless attention of the House of Commons. He began by fumbling in his breast pockets for his papers, threatening the war-like rose with final destruction. His opening sentence, delivered with embarrassed manner in a low voice, seemed to indicate that now, as had frequently happened of late, he had nothing that he could very well communicate to the House. Whilst every one was burning with anxiety to learn what had been made known to-day, he went back to last week, and showed a disposition to enter upon historical review. Abruptly abandoning this intention, he alluded incidentally to the fact that since the receipt in Easter week of the Russian answer, which "upon examination and consideration" her Majesty's Government had found unacceptable, a more favourable despatch had been received from St. Petersburg. But that, he intimated without expressing it in words, was at the moment an immaterial circumstance. And then he came to the business of the hour, reading with complicated parenthetical sentences extracts from the conflicting narratives of the Russian Government and of Sir Peter Lumsden, describing how the Russians drove the Afghans out of Penjdeh.

There was doubtless no intention of displaying art in this way of dealing with the question; and yet it was the expression of the highest art. It was a duty imposed upon the Premier to make known to the House of Commons and the nation the momentous events that had taken place on the Afghan frontier. The facts were fully within his own information, and he might have given in his own words a moderate and judicial summary of events, as reported to the Government from St. Petersburg and the camp of the British commander on the Afghan frontier. But in taking this course he might involuntarily have said something that would be misconstrued either in England or in Russia. He had the despatches themselves in his hand, and he did the simplest and most effective thing by reading from them, first the Russian and then the less adorned narrative

of Sir Peter Lumsden. His very stumbling over the reading, and going back to find the context, gave an air of reality to the proceedings that might have been lacking from ornate speech. He was as a messenger coming in breathless and re-citing his portentous news in the ear of the House in the very words in which it had been committed to him on the scene of action.

Though he avoided comment, and even emphasis, there were subtle tones in his voice when he read certain passages that found response in the listening Senate. For the most part members sat silent, craning forward to catch the words uttered in low tone, and delivered with halting manner. They, like the Premier, had evidently made up their minds that this was not a time for noisy demonstration. But it was too much for them to hear how the chief of the Russian staff, challenged with breach of the arrangement of the 17th of March, had declared he never heard of it, nor received instructions based upon its stipulations. Something like a long indrawn sigh of pain filled the House at this announcement, and members looked at each other and shook their heads as if this were indeed damning proof of what they had feared all along. Again, when the Premier read the telegram from St. Petersburg, in which was expressed the earnest hope of the Czar and his Foreign Minister that "this unhappy incident" should not be made the occasion of breaking off negotiations for the frontier line, there was a bitter laugh.

But these were the only manifestations of feeling with which the statement was received. There was no rushing together of excited groups, no patriotic defiance of the aggressor. One or two questions designed to elicit further information were quietly put and quietly answered. Then, somehow, the subject dropped; the House went into Committee, and the same men who had been listening with intensest interest to the statement of the Prime Minister appeared to be not less absolutely engrossed in consideration of the arrangement for the building of proposed new public offices. There was, probably, not a man in the House who did not believe that the news just proclaimed by the Premier was the immediate precursor of war. But, with the utmost expedition, declaration of war might not be made till the morrow, and here at hand was the proposal of the First Commissioner of Works to build new offices for the Depart-

ments of the War and the Navy, and even to include residences for some of the chief officials. Accordingly, the House of Commons taking off its coat, in Mr. Parnell's metaphorical sense, and bending all its energies upon the settlement of this question, argued, wrangled, and divided with as much singleness of purpose as if there were no war-cloud lying low over the land.

Apr. 11.—The Major. I had an opportunity to-day of inquiring about the old popular favourite, Major O'Gorman. It is little more than five years since he stepped off the Parliamentary stage on which he filled so large a part, and since then he has dropped into an obscurity that contrasts strangely with his former national renown. He offered himself as a candidate for re-election in 1880. But his candidature was frowned upon by Mr. Parnell, who never understood the Major's peculiar humour. Accordingly he had no chance, but still feeling the necessity for taking part in public life strong upon him, he stood for election for the Board of Guardians, and was triumphantly returned. For a while the voice that had shaken the Imperial Senate was attuned to the consideration of parish rates, and the contumelious character of individual paupers. The resolute will that had confronted the Speaker of the House of Commons bent itself before the ruling of the Chairman of the Board of Guardians. At the last election the Major was not returned, whereupon he retired to the family seat of the O'Gormans, and there broods over the days that are no more.

Apr. 17.—A critical question. Like many historic scenes, that which hurtled over the slumberous head of Farnworth-cum-Radcliffe was sprung suddenly upon the House. It was just half-past seven. Many members, freed from anxiety about the nomenclature of particular districts, had gone away to dress for dinner. Others were already seated in the dining-room, whilst from forty to fifty members remained in the House, for the most part silent and gloomy, probably oppressed by that mysterious sense of apprehension which precedes a convulsion of nature. Mr. Slagg rose from the corner seat below the gangway, and made a proposal "on Schedule 7, page 63, line 9, of the Redistribution Bill, to leave out Farnworth-cum-

Radcliffe, and insert Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth." Mr. Slagg's remarks incidentally made known the fact that Mr. Algernon Egerton was the champion of the other side, and, regardless of the public feeling at Radcliffe, was resolved to maintain the integrity of the Bill, and insist upon the precedence of Farnworth. Both Mr. Algernon Egerton and Mr. Slagg are by nature serious men, and in their brief but pointed speeches they did justice to the theme. There was something pathetic in Mr. Slagg's attitude, and in the yearning look he cast across the House at Mr. Egerton. If, now, he would but listen to reason, and let it stand Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth! Mr. Egerton was evidently touched, but sense of duty predominated over personal inclination. In halting phrase, betraying genuine emotion, he contested the claims of Radcliffe, gently, but firmly, put back Mr. Slagg's pleading hand, and declared for Farnworth-cum-Radcliffe. In one of Mr. Matthew Arnold's most beautiful poems it is told how, in one of the earliest internationalist difficulties in Central Asia, the contending armies met by the marge of a great river, and encamped, intending to give battle on the morrow. In the meantime the champions of either host stepped forward, and engaged in single combat, the rest standing aside and looking on. Thus it was to-night. Whilst Mr. Slagg and Mr. Egerton strove with each other the House looked on, none other presuming to join in the fray.

The division bell clanged through all the corridors, disturbing early diners at their soup, causing sudden commotion in the smoking room, bringing members in from the reading rooms and the uttermost recesses of the building. When, after due pause, the sand ran out, and the Speaker put the question, the House presented an animated appearance. The Bar was thronged, and members were hurrying to and fro across the floor with anxious inquiry as to what was the stake at issue. In slow speech, and with impressive manner, the Speaker put the question:—

"Schedule 7, page 63, line 9, proposed to leave out Farnworth-cum-Radcliffe, and insert Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth. The question I have to put is that Farnworth-cum-Radcliffe stand part of the bill. Those who are of that opinion say 'Aye!'"

The deep, stern voice of Mr. Algernon Egerton reverberated

through the Chamber to the cry of "Aye!" followed by a scattered shout of approval.

"The contrary, 'No!'"

"No!" cried Mr. Slagg, and again support coming from various benches, showed how political parties were cleft in twain by this question.

"I think the 'Ayes' have it," said the Speaker.

"The 'Noes' have it," Mr. Slagg retorted, with growing severity.

Then from the now crowded benches members uprose; the throng at the Bar broke up in confusion, and parting right and left, the multitude hustled out to record their votes. All went but one. Sir Charles Forster, arrested in his wanderings through the corridor by the sound of the division bell, had come back and now stood in forlornest condition in the very centre of the floor, recovered hat in drooping hand, and brow corrugated with traces of profound mental struggle. When the division was announced Sir Charles had expected that, as usual, Lord Richard Grosvenor and Lord Kensington would be named as tellers, a circumstance calculated to save an honest man much trouble. All he would have to do would be to see which way Ministers voted and go with them. But here was a sad and disconcerting circumstance. The Government tellers were not named, and to a member who had just entered the House all guidance on this head was withdrawn. So Sir Charles, holding on to his hat as if it were an anchor, stood stranded in the centre of the floor of the House, a picture of human embarrassment pitiful to see. On one side Farnworth-cum-Radcliffe drew him into the "Aye" lobby; on the other Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth wooed him for the "Noes." At length, Mr. Slagg coming to his assistance led him out, and to-morrow, on looking down the division list, Sir Charles will find that he voted for Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth.

The division disclosed a remarkable disintegration of parties. Sir Charles Dilke voted for the Bill, and Sir Stafford Northcote, faithful to the sacred covenant, went with him. Lord Randolph Churchill, subdued by this combination of official authority, meekly followed the two leaders. But Lord Richard Grosvenor, the Ministerial whip, voted against the Minister in charge of the Bill. The Solicitor-General took the

same course, and even the Judge-Advocate-General, strengthened in his position by the futile attack of General Alexander on the previous night, separated himself on this question from the Cabinet.

When the figures were announced, showing that Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth had triumphed by 65 votes against 58, a wild cheer went up from the Slaggites, answered from the Egertonian camp by a mocking laugh, under the forced humour of which lurked some of the worst passions of mankind. But what had as yet been settled did not technically go beyond the decision to leave out from the Bill Farnworth-cum-Radcliffe. There remained the task of inserting Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth. Would Mr. Egerton lead his party to battle again? The Speaker put the question amid dead silence. A moment's pause. Mr. Egerton looked wildly round; his lips moved, but no sound of challenge issued, and Radcliffe-cum-Farnworth gained the day.

Apr. 21. — The To-night Mr. Gladstone moved in Committee  
Vote of Credit. the grant of a Vote of Credit for eleven millions. In reviewing Ministerial policy in the Soudan, he did not shirk reference to the speech with which he opened the Session of the current year, showing that since he had then indicated an intention to pursue the Mahdi to Khartoum many things had happened. It was ascertained beyond doubt that General Gordon, whose relief was the main object of the expedition, had sealed his mission by his blood; the Mahdi was no longer a triumphant general; and, above all, Imperial interests, attacked elsewhere, demanded the concentration of the resources of the Empire.

It was when these preliminaries were disposed of, and the Premier came to the subject of the "special preparations," that the audience drew itself closer together, and displayed the liveliest signs of interest. The manner of the orator also changed. Differing from the course taken when he first proposed the Vote of Credit, the Premier was not tied by the (to him) grievous bonds of manuscript. He had his notes, but he declaimed his speech. As he slowly uttered the glowing sentences, it was plain to see that he had in his mind's eye that vaster audience that encircled the listening House of Commons. He was addressing the Committee; but Europe was at the door, and Russia was

listening with strained attention to every syllable that fell from his lips.

Oppressed by a sense of responsibility, he spoke with unusual slowness, now and then with thrilling solemnity. Forgetful of his harassed voice, he uplifted it to its highest pitch in declaiming the passage which contains a full description of the policy the Government have pursued.

"We have," he said, "laboured, and we will continue to labour, for an honourable settlement by pacific means; but one thing I may venture to say with regard to that sad contingency of an outbreak of war or a rupture of relations between two great Powers such as Russia and England—one thing I will say with great strength of conviction and great earnestness in my endeavour to impress it upon the Committee, that we will strive to conduct ourselves to the end of this diplomatic controversy in such a way as that, if unhappily it is to end in violence or rupture, we may, at least, be able to challenge the verdict of civilised mankind, upon a review of the demands and refusals, to say whether we have or whether we have not done all that men could do, by every just and honourable effort, to prevent the plunging of two such countries, with all the millions that own their sway, into bloodshed and strife."

This passage, delivered with much animation, was greeted with a burst of cheering in which the Conservatives, breaking through party trammels, and swayed by the impulses of nationality, joined with great enthusiasm. After this it was plain sailing for the Premier. The heat of his noble eloquence had welded his audience into a single mass. There were no longer Conservatives or Liberals—only Englishmen listening to the greatest Parliamentary orator born amongst them. When he resumed his seat, which he did after speaking for an hour, all thought of bickering was subdued. The Chairman put the question that the vote do pass. With a sudden impulse the Committee shouted "Aye!" and another burst of cheering welcomed the accomplishment of this remarkable work.

Apr. 24.—A dislocated telegram. There is a report everywhere current this afternoon that the French Government, as a preliminary to more serious action hostile to England, have withdrawn their Consul from Cairo. When the House met Sir Stafford

Northcote rose and put the question to the Premier. Had the Government any information that France had withdrawn its Consul from Egypt?

"No," said Mr. Gladstone, with a slight air of surprise, "We have no information."

The House heard this announcement with satisfaction that expressed itself in a cheer. Everybody was more certain than ever that the report was a monstrous invention, and generous minds were disturbed by the feeling that they owed an apology to a gallant neighbour for even harbouring a suspicion of un-friendliness.

Ten minutes later a letter was passed up the Treasury bench to where the Premier sat. He opened, and read the contents twice over. They were evidently of a surprising character, and, after mastering them, he remained for a moment sunk in deep contemplation. He rose, and the House instinctively knew that a communication of importance was about to be made. At the moment members were streaming out of the House, for the Speaker had half risen to call on the orders of the day, and if they tarried longer they would be involved in the dry details of actual business. The stream was suddenly stayed, and members rushed back to their seats amid excited cries of "Order, order!" When the bustle had subsided, Mr. Gladstone, speaking in a low tone, said he had, when a question was put to him by Sir Stafford Northcote, given the information in his possession.

"But," he added, "I am sorry to say that within the few minutes that have since elapsed a telegram has been received stating that the French Chargé d'Affaires left Cairo this morning."

It was all true, then; and France, our ancient ally, had chosen the present moment to give an old friend a stab in the back. Excited groups gathered in the lobby, and discussed this new aspect of affairs. War with a Power like Russia was a prospect sufficiently serious to sober men; but war with Russia and France combined was truly a big undertaking. It was instructive to note that conversation turned entirely in the direction of indignant commentary on the alleged action of France. There was no flinching from the prospect newly opened up, nor any doubt expressed that, since it must be, England would be ready to fight Russia and France combined.

Then came a whisper that there had been a mistake some-

where. Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild was accredited with the earliest contradiction. He had received a telegram from Cairo denying the reports in the evening newspapers, and affirming that the French agent still remained at Cairo. Presently the explanation of the whole business was forthcoming. Urgent instructions had been left at the Foreign Office that in the event of any telegrams arriving from Cairo they should be communicated to the Premier in the House of Commons with the least possible delay. The zealous clerks had, accordingly, not waited to finish the deciphering of the despatch before making the Premier aware of its arrival. They sent off by messenger the first part of the telegram from Sir Evelyn Baring, unfortunately forgetting to add that there was more to follow. "This morning," ran the message, "the French Chargé d'Affaires left—" and here it closed. Ten minutes later there was handed to the astonished Premier the conclusion of the message, "—some papers for my consideration."

"The king has gone to pot." This news restored the equanimity and good humour of the House. Once more every one agreed that it was incredible that on such a pretext, at such a crisis, France should display distinct unfriendliness to England. People began to recollect stories more or less apropos. There was for example, the communication which reached an English morning paper in the troublous days of 1848. The French Revolution had just been completed, and no one could say how far the conflagration would run. Thrones were tottering from St. Petersburg to Madrid. The King of Prussia was in particular thought to be in dangerous straits, and the enterprising morning paper had a confidential agent at the capital with instructions to telegraph the impending fall of the monarchy the moment it took place. Late one night came the fateful message, "The King has gone to pot." This was colloquial but emphatic, and a leader was written commenting on this new downfall amongst ancient monarchies. Early next morning came another message containing the cabalistic word, "sdam." This was, alas! the conclusion of the first message, dislocated in the exigencies of imperfectly administered telegraphy. The King of Prussia, it seemed, had only gone to Potsdam, and his throne was safe.

Members of the House went off to dinner cheered by this story, the certainty that it was all a mistake, and that France was still a friend to be counted on.

Apr. 27.—Lord Palmerston hung.

With respect to the curious incident in the House of Commons on Friday night when Mr. Gladstone read half a telegram from Sir Evelyn Baring under the impression that it was a complete message, many stories are recalled of similar misapprehensions arising from misconstrued telegrams. One of the funniest I hear from an *attaché* of the Italian Embassy here. It seems that Lord Palmerston was always spoken of in Italian Ministerial circles by the diminutive "Palmer." It was a habit of Count Cavour to spend a good deal of his leisure time in the telegraph office at Turin. He was thus engaged on the 14th of June, 1856, when he stumbled upon a telegram in the following words:—

"Palmer hung this morning. Declared he went to the scaffold a murdered man."

The shock to Count Cavour was momentarily severe, but he was presently reassured by having it explained to him that the paragraph did not refer to the great English statesman, but to the Rugeley murderer.

May 11.—Painful scene in the Lords.

The House of Lords was disturbed to-night from its usual state of equanimity by an incident that had a startling effect, and might have had a tragic end. Lord Granville had made a brief statement about Afghanistan, and the Duke of Argyll was eloquently orating on the general subject, when suddenly a loud shriek rang through the House. It came from a back bench behind the Duke, and Lord Dormer, who was sitting there, was seen to fall forward. The Duke of Argyll resumed his seat, and peers from all parts of the House ran forward to offer assistance. Lord Aberdeen had the presence of mind to bring a glass of water, with which the lips of the noble lord, who had now been laid prostrate on the bench, were moistened. Lord Granville, crossing the House, spoke a few hurried words to Lord Salisbury, returned to his seat, and moved the adjournment of the House, which was at once agreed to.

Meanwhile the peers were busy about the patient. Doctors

had been sent for in all directions, and two—Dr. Farquharson and Dr. Lyons—hastened in from the House of Commons. A messenger from Westminster hospital also appeared on the scene. As there seemed no chance of recovery a stretcher was sent for, which was presently brought in by an imposing procession of policemen. On this was laid a cushion, and elaborate preparations made for carrying the noble lord away, the impression in remote parts of the House being that he was dead. These preliminaries seemed to have a reviving effect upon him. He sat up, stared around, and then prepared to walk out. He positively declined to have anything to do with the stretcher, and with some assistance walked out and was presently got home.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### DEFEAT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Disunion in the Cabinet—Hats—Lord Sherbrooke—Shouting down the Premier—An uninvited Visitant—Dying!—Mr. Parnell attempts to revive the moribund House—Mr. Biggar's Suspicion—Foreboding—Defeat of the Government—A Tax on Tea—Dulness—Excitement—“A dutiful Communication”—Popular Unconcern—Lord R. Churchill—A Dip into the Future—A merry Mob—Sir W. Harcourt makes a Mistake—A Man of Business.

May 15.—Disunion in the Cabinet. There is more in Mr. John Morley's notice of amendment to the proposed introduction of a Crimes Bill than meets the eye. The fact is the Government is at the present moment on the eve of dissolution. It is not Russia nor Egypt, but Ireland.

The opposition which Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke have always offered to attempts to govern Ireland by coercion has not been smoothed down by the fact of their taking office. They have, I believe, steadfastly fought against the determination of the majority of the Cabinet partially to renew the Crimes Act. They were beaten; and the announcement by Mr. Gladstone of the introduction of a Bill not being followed by their immediate resignation, it was generally supposed that the cloud had blown over, and that a compromise

had been effected. This was recognised in the announcement made by Mr. Gladstone on Tuesday, that the Government were, after all, determined to attempt to deal this session with the purchase clauses of the Land Act. That step, however, has rather had the effect of hastening the crisis than of smoothing it over.

Neither Mr. Chamberlain nor Sir Charles Dilke objects to a measure dealing with land purchase. What they do object to is that it should be introduced at the present crisis. Their watchword is, "Local Government for Ireland, and no coercion." If you have coercion and no extension of local government, that is a state of things not compensated by the introduction of a Bill dealing with the purchase clauses. Indeed, I believe they take the view that the introduction of such a Bill at the present time would be harmful rather than otherwise. It would be an appropriate sequel to the extension of local government, but to give it priority is dangerous. If Ireland is to pledge its land for money assistance, it had evidently better be done upon the credit of local governing bodies than under the supervision of an Imperial Government harassed on many sides.

It is possible that what looks like an already broken bridge may be mended, and the crisis may pass away. That will depend upon the squeezability of the Whig portion of the Cabinet. The Radical section have, I believe, resolutely made up their minds that the fullest extent to which they can conscientiously go to meet the views of Earl Spencer is that the Crimes Act, if renewed at all, shall run only for one year. This would leave the matter to be dealt with by the new Parliament—evidently a desirable thing.

Failing concession on this point, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, with whatever profound regret at taking a step that must be embarrassing to Mr. Gladstone, will resign their places in the Government. They will be followed out of the Cabinet, certainly by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, and possibly by one or two others. It is difficult to see how, with such powerful forces below the gangway, a reconstructed Government will be able to carry the Crimes Bill.

This state of affairs, as may well be supposed, weighs heavily upon Mr. Gladstone, who is still struggling to effect an honourable settlement with Russia.

May 16.—Hats. Hats play a much more prominent part in Parliamentary procedure than the public generally are aware of. The privilege of wearing a hat in the presence of the Speaker exclusively belongs to members. In this fact Mr. Bradlaugh finds an opportunity of quietly demonstrating. A special resolution of the House forbids him to cross the Bar. But when this was passed the possibility of his claiming membership by wearing his hat in presence of the Speaker was not thought of. Consequently, when Mr. Bradlaugh takes his seat on the benches under the gallery below the Bar he invariably keeps his hat on, and thus proclaims his membership. It sometimes happens that a peer taking his seat in the gallery over the clock, forgetting for the moment the change of scene, puts on his hat, leans his elbows on the front rail, and prepares himself for a quiet survey of the House, a purpose promptly interfered with by a tremendous hubbub. The indignation and excitement which follow upon the throwing out by the House of Lords of a Reform Bill or a Land Bill that has passed the Commons are nothing compared with what ensues upon the discovery of a noble lord seated in the gallery of the House of Commons with his hat on.

Lord Sherbrooke. Mr. Lowe, visiting the House shortly after he had become Lord Sherbrooke, was the involuntary cause of such a disturbance. Finding himself seated in a place familiar through many years, he forgot all that had happened since February, 1880, and mechanically put on his hat. The messenger at the end of the gallery moved uneasily in his chair, coughed till he succeeded in attracting the noble lord's attention, and then, by touching his own head and nodding at the viscount's hat, endeavoured to make him comprehend the situation. But Lord Sherbrooke, after blinking benevolently upon the man, came to the conclusion that he had been drinking, and returned to his attitude of contemplation of the House below. Presently he was discovered by one of the watchful Irish members, who, jealous in the cause of order, took note of the irregularity. A cry of "Order, Order!" beginning in this part of the House was, when the occasion was discovered, joyously taken up on all the benches till the cause of the unanimous roar was explained to Lord Sherbrooke. He

hastily took off his hat, and presently took off himself, retiring with keener satisfaction to the less excitable atmosphere of the House of Lords.

Parliament is the only public assembly in England where gentlemen elect to conduct business with their hats on. But whilst this privilege is enjoyed and largely availed of, it is strictly limited to the sitting position. A member who crossed the floor with his hat on would be howled at with that especial fervour of indignation which members preserve for these breaches of etiquette. A member sitting in a corner seat below the gangway, and desiring to speak to a member on the other corner, may not lean across the space with his hat on, but must make the movement uncovered. It is not the law, but it is certainly custom, prevalent for many years, that the leader of the House should not wear his hat on the Treasury bench. In the case of Sir Stafford Northcote this custom is habitually extended to the leader of the Opposition. No one ever saw Mr. Gladstone wearing his own hat on the Treasury bench. The House, in a paroxysm of laughter, once beheld him struggling to get on the Solicitor-General's. But that was under exceptional circumstances. Since that tragic event Sir Stafford Northcote has always observed the precaution of bringing his hat in with him, and carefully deposits it in the cupboard under the table before which he sits. Mr. Disraeli, like Mr. Gladstone, never wore his hat on the Treasury bench; and Lord Hartington, when he succeeds to the heritage of leadership, will have to unlearn a lifelong habit.

May 19.—  
Shouting down the  
Premier.

In making a statement to-night on the course of public business, the Premier spoke, as has been a matter of custom of late, amid continuous noisy interruptions from a section of the Conservative party. To-night this method of Parliamentary procedure, novel as directed against the leader of the House, reached a climax, which had the desired effect of temporarily silencing the Premier. After a painful pause he observed, in broken voice, that this new kind of Parliamentary warfare was of little matter to him, whose personal interposition in political strife was a question of weeks rather than of months, certainly of months more than of years. But he had a deep conviction that within the last three years a blow

had been struck at the liberty and dignity of the House of Commons by these intrusions upon debate.

This protest, delivered with much dignity, though the Premier was evidently labouring under physical depression after long contention with a noisy faction, had an immediate effect, and he was permitted thereafter to continue his remarks with the courtesy that is extended to the humblest member of the House.

June 6.—An un-invited visitant. The reappearance of Mr. Rylands in Committee to-night reminded members of old times and other Parliaments. He rose from the very corner seat whence, in the Parliament of 1868, he was wont to examine the estimates to the utmost farthing. Failing to obtain a seat at the general election of 1874, he came back two years later to find the old state of things already changed. Mr. Biggar had appeared upon the scene. Mr. Butt was still nominal leader of the Home Rulers; but his authority was practically gone, and obstruction, that Parliamentary octopus, was strangling opportunities of public business. Mr. Rylands was as ready as of yore to examine the public accounts; but the rôle had been taken up by the Irish members, and in course of time it became impossible for an English member to uplift his voice in Committee without playing the part of an obstructionist. Mr. Rylands, Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Monk, and some half a dozen others, who in the Parliament of 1868 had done useful work in checking the public accounts, found themselves reduced to silence, with the alternative of playing the game of the obstructionists, and incurring public reproach. They elected to be silent, and Committee nights were given up bodily to the Irish members.

Just now obstruction does not take the particular form of debating at undue length every vote in the estimates. Mr. Rylands, who has this session made one or two timid attempts to resume his former position, came out to-night with undiminished vigour. Members sitting with closed eyes, listening to that familiar voice, dreamt they were young again, that Parnellism was a thing yet unborn, that the resuscitation of Mr. Disraeli was not yet accomplished, that a spirited foreign policy was still in the womb of the future, and that six years of Tory domination had not prepared for a Liberal Administration a

woful legacy of responsibility spread over the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Dying! The Angel of Death is hovering over the present Parliament. On Thursday and yesterday you might almost have heard the fluttering of his wings. When the House met on Thursday after the Whitsun Recess it seemed already in a comatose state. There were large gaps in the benches on both sides, and those present moved and spoke with a languor that betokened approaching dissolution. Lord Randolph Churchill was the only man who seemed to have preserved the pristine vigour of a member of Parliament. He was there, alert and aggressive as ever. Mr. Gladstone, on the contrary, displayed in aggravated form the lassitude that marked his bearing during the fortnight preceding the adjournment. In making the long rambling statement explanatory of the disclosure of the sacred covenant, he spoke in a husky voice that was at certain points inaudible. Weariness beyond expression was indicated in his bearing, and in whatever jocund mood the House might have met, this pathetic exhibition of physical pain and mental weariness would have sufficed to subdue it.

Mr. Parnell attempts to revive the moribund House.

Mr. Parnell, taking note of the prevailing tone, had adopted a peculiar means of infusing some vitality into the proceedings. Early in the history of the present Parliament he one night created a profound sensation by appearing in his place in a suit of yellow-ochre clothes of rough material. He nightly, and all night long, scared the eyes of the Saxon with this remarkable exhibition, which marked the high tide of obstruction. Wherever resistance to the authority of the Chair was most uncompromising, there, under the astonished gaslight, blazed the yellow-ochre suit, as in another field flashed the white plume of Henry of Navarre. Some weeks later, Mr. Parnell having gone back to duller colours in his dress, a fresh sensation was created by Mr. T. P. O'Connor appearing in a suit of the same material and colour, save that its brightness was somewhat dimmed as if by use. This gave rise to the report that Mr. Parnell had passed the suit on to his faithful henchman, a story not credited in serious circles at the time, and on Thursday night

triumphantly refuted; for here was the Irish leader with the well-remembered yellow-ochre pantaloons, their brightness scarcely modified by coat and waistcoat of sober black.

Mr. Biggar's suspicion. This device, well meant, wholly failed of its purpose. Possibly if Mr. Parnell had resisted the tendency to half measures, and appeared in the full glories of the suit, there might also have come back something of the flash and fire of olden times. As it was, nothing came of the demonstration. Even Mr. Biggar was not to be aroused from the state of depression he shared with the rest. He has in charge a case well calculated to stir deep feeling in the House of Commons. It is reported that the nurse at the workhouse in Larne is in the habit of receiving visits at stated intervals from her son, a boy who is not resident in the house. There would be nothing remarkable in this. A boy may yearn for the maternal caress even though his mother be a nurse in a workhouse. But what Mr. Biggar notes, upon credible information conveyed to him, is that the visits of the boy are timed for the dinner-hour, and there is, in the language of the Coercion Bill, "reasonable suspicion" that he surreptitiously obtains a mid-day meal. Mr. Biggar has placed upon the paper of the House of Commons a notice of his intention to question the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant upon this matter. In the mind of the hon. member for Cavan there is no doubt that Lord Spencer is at the bottom of it, and with that sense of public duty which characterises him, he is determined to sift the matter. Earlier in the life of Parliament he would not have let a day pass before bringing this question to an issue. Yesterday and to-day he dallied with his opportunity. The heaviness of the political atmosphere oppressed him, and he was not to be roused from a state of lethargy even by the deeply designed manœuvre of his respected chief.

On the Liberal side the feeling of depression and disgust with Parliamentary life is strengthened by the peculiar circumstances of the Ministry. Liberals have as a party long been accustomed to share in the obloquy poured upon their leaders by Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, Mr. Chaplin, and Lord Randolph Churchill. They know that, according to definition from this quarter, a Liberal Government is a body of men who have failed in Europe

and Asia, not to mention Africa and the Leeward Islands. But hitherto they have felt that in supporting the Ministry they have been following a body of men who worked together, and were prepared to stand or fall together. They have now learned that that is not the case, and that for more than a fortnight the action of the Cabinet has been paralysed by an impending crisis. This, if it never comes to anything, and ends in a compromise that will prevent the breaking up of the Cabinet, will have more seriously wounded the Liberal party than all the Votes of Censure moved since the present Parliament began. It has induced a sense of uncertainty and insecurity which, combined with the natural access of weariness in full view of the end of Parliament, makes men heartily sick of the whole business, and chiefly anxious that it should be over. When a party, however loyal, is brought into the habit of looking forward to a particular day when a Cabinet Council is to be held, and has the assurance that when the Council is over it shall learn whether three important Ministers have retired, or whether a truce has been patched up, it is impossible for it to keep up its spirits.

*Foreboding.* It was pitiful to note to-night the manner in which, when public business commenced, all eyes were turned towards the Treasury bench. The Cabinet Council which (quite erroneously) it was thought would settle the matter of the Ministerial crisis, had been held. Mr. Gladstone was in his place, looking pale and worried, with a paper in his hand, upon which he now and then turned a troubled glance. He does not bring down manuscript to the Treasury bench unless it contains the notes for some portentous announcement. What this might be members could only guess, and all guessed the same thing. Sir William Harcourt sat next to the Premier, even his massive head bent under the pressure of a Ministerial crisis. Beyond was Lord Hartington, an interesting convalescent who every one was glad to see had recovered his robust health. Presently Mr. Childers came in. But that was all. Sir Charles Dilke, usually most punctual in his attendance, was absent, and so was Mr. Chamberlain. What had happened was clear to the meanest comprehension. The crisis had burst. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke had resigned, and the sheet of note-paper with which Mr. Gladstone nervously

toed contained the terms in which he would in due course announce the fact to the House. Five minutes later Sir Charles Dilke bustled in and took a seat near the Home Secretary. Evidently there was somewhere a flaw in the course of conjecture, which was finally shattered by the appearance of Mr. Chamberlain with a white orchid—symbol of peace—in his button-hole.

The Ministry were for the moment safe. But the crisis was postponed, not averted, a turn of affairs which rather deepened the feeling of discontent and depression. If anything was to happen, in Heaven's name let it happen at once, and make an end of this indefinite dragging on through the slough of uncertainty.

Mr. Gladstone, rising at eleven o'clock to-night in a moderately filled House, delivered a remarkable and interesting speech. Looking at him as he stood at the table, with a certain ashen-grey tinge on his face and a distinct lassitude in his manner, it might well be thought that here was a man weary to death of incessant labour, and gasping for the holiday near at hand. This view was strengthened by the tone in which he spoke. The magnificent voice, for fifty years familiar in the House of Commons, which not many years ago resounded over Blackheath, and which sounded like a clarion throughout Midlothian, is irretrievably broken. I believe that during his last visit to Midlothian Mr. Gladstone overstrained it, and though the failure was at the time regarded as temporary, there is no doubt now of its permanency. But though the Premier seemed almost in the last stage of physical exhaustion, and though his voice was husky, and sometimes did not rise above a whisper, there was no sign of failing power in the skill and force with which he met the battery arrayed against him, and which for some hours had been blazing away at every possible point of Ministerial policy. The sentences were as perfect in their construction as ever, the play of fancy as free, and the sarcasm as keen as in his best days.

June 8.—Defeat of the Government. The House of Commons assembled to-night with absolute absence of apprehension of what would happen before daybreak. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had placed upon the notice paper a resolution

declaring that the increase proposed by the Budget in the duties levied on beer and spirits is inequitable in the absence of a corresponding addition to the duties on wine. He further protested against the death duties. It was understood that the fight, such as it might be, would range round the beer and spirits. The House was crowded at question time, for there had been a strong whip on either side. But, though members had come to vote, they would not remain to listen. Mr. Childers had whittled away the interest in his speech by delivering its most important passages piecemeal. The House knew exactly what he had to propose, and Mr. Childers's eloquence is not of itself sufficiently attractive to keep a House. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who was to move the amendment, is an orator standing in the same category as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Besides, there was over the whole business that air of unreality with which the House is familiar at these recurrent crises. The Conservatives had threatened this same motion when the increase in the spirit duty stood at two shillings. Now it had been reduced to one, they felt bound to go on. But on neither side was any other result expected than a long night of dreary speech-making, and a division in which the Government would have a more or less satisfactory majority.

**A tax on tea.** Sir Charles Dilke introduced some liveliness into the debate by the rapidity and smartness with which he jumped at Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's unwonted indiscretion. For a long time the Conservatives, in moving Votes of Censure upon the Government, have been implored to declare an alternative policy, and have hitherto judiciously refrained. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, in a moment of weakness, pointed to tea as the article which he would be inclined to tax, supposing his party were returned to power. Sir Charles Dilke made much of this, and the comicality of the situation was intensified when Lord George Hamilton presently rose and declared, amid contemptuous cries from ear-witnesses, that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had not proposed that tea should be taxed.

**Dulness.** After this the House fell into the dinner-hour, and the debate into the hands of the contingent who usually employ this part of the sitting. Those famous

brewers, Mr. Allsopp and Mr. Coope, gave their disinterested opinion against the Budget Bill, and were supported by Mr. W. H. O'Sullivan, whose initials have been filled out by his humorous compatriots, who speak of him as "W. H. isky O'Sullivan." Even Mr. Whitbread's loyalty to the Government was shaken on this occasion. But he, too, is a brewer.

Very few listened to these disquisitions, and if Mr. Biggar had not been participating in another game he might have attempted to count out the House. Shortly after eleven the Chancellor of the Exchequer presented himself to make his second speech of the evening, and members, who had flocked in to hear when the division would take place, speedily withdrew. Nor was the liveliness of the situation increased by the speech of Sir Stafford Northcote, who followed. The leader of the Opposition deeming this, as he said, a fitting opportunity of reviewing the financial policy of the Government, a low groan echoed along the half-empty benches. Mr. Gladstone, who had been absent during the long dinner-hour, returned whilst Mr. Childers was speaking, and had the advantage of hearing the whole of Sir Stafford Northcote's address, which he followed with angry frowns, shaking of the head, and tossing about on the bench, sure portent of a storm.

Excitement. The Premier rose at ten minutes to one, and the news that he was on his feet speedily filled the House. Members had thronged the lobbies, the reading-room, and the smoke-room—any place but the benches of the House of Commons. Now they came trooping in, and the House, for the first time since the debate opened, presented an animated appearance. Mr. Gladstone was in fine form. The huskiness in his voice, painfully noticed since the House resumed after the Whitsun recess, had almost entirely disappeared. Only once towards the close of his speech, when he burst forth into scathing reference to "the regular Opposition, the loyal Opposition, the national Opposition, the patriotic Opposition, the constitutional Opposition," did his voice threaten to fail. But he kept on to the end, speaking with an animation and a force rarely excelled even by himself.

But, in spite of the vigour of this speech, it was difficult to maintain the attention of the House. No one anticipated that

the Ministry and the country were on the eve of a great political crisis. All the arguments were cut and dried, and even the fine fury of the Premier could not infuse life into the dry bones. What members wanted was to vote forthwith and go away. The only flutter of interest that stirred their breasts arose upon the question as to what would be the precise Government majority. That it would be at least twenty nobody expressed a doubt.

When Mr. Gladstone resumed his seat it was close upon half-past one, and the division was forthwith called. The welcome sound of the bell rang through all the corridors, and members came trooping in till every seat was filled, and at the Bar stood a serried mass, Liberals, Conservatives, and Parnellites, shoulder to shoulder. Before the question had been put a second time, those who had already heard it began to make short cuts for the lobby. Mr. Gladstone, who after the conclusion of his speech had sat with folded arms and flushed face, picked up his writing-pad and hurried off to the lobby. He had yet his letter to the Queen to write, and as the hosts passing through the lobbies would occupy at least ten minutes, he would, according to his wont, improve the occasion in one of the lobby recesses. When he came back he opened the writing-pad on his knee and went on with the letter, undisturbed by the stream of members that constantly passed him on their way to their places.

At a quarter to two the inflow of members began to fall off. They had at the first rushed in like the sea. They now trickled back like a brook in June. As the final moment arrived the excitement grew in intensity. Lord Randolph Churchill was back, sitting on the extreme edge of the seat, straining his eyes, first towards one door, then to the other, looking for the teller who should be first in. Sir Henry Wolff bustled in and out, bringing the latest report of the figures. The buzz of conversation rose higher and higher; and still, as at another crisis Madame Dufarge went on knitting, Mr. Gladstone went on writing, "presenting his humble duty to the Queen," and informing her how matters thus far had fared.

Presently Lord Kensington, who had been "telling" the Ministerialists, made his way with difficulty through the crowd at the Bar. Lord Richard Grosvenor, who was "telling" with

the Opposition, had not yet arrived. Here was a portentous incident, the significance of which could not be misunderstood. If the Ministerialists were through the lobby first, they must be the smaller number. But it was remembered that the Liberals, even when in a considerable majority, are often the first through the lobby. No one dared either be sure or sad.

Sir Henry Wolff, who had made another excursion to the gates of the Opposition lobby, returned, with radiant face, calling out the numbers as he passed the front Opposition Bench, and carrying the glad tidings to his excited leader. Then Lord Randolph gave vent to his feelings in a shout of delight. It was taken up from members near him, and was echoed in the Irish camp behind. In another minute all the tellers were in, and it was seen that Lord Richard Grosvenor, instead of moving to the right, the place of the victor, was edging to the left.

Lord Randolph Churchill leapt on to the bench, and waving his hat madly above his head, uproariously cheered. Mr. Healy followed his example, and presently all the Irish members, and nearly all the Conservatives below the gangway, were standing on the benches waving hats and pocket-handkerchiefs, and raising a deafening cheer. This was renewed when the figures were read out by Mr. Winn, and again when they were proclaimed from the Chair. From the Irish camp rose cries of "Buckshot! Buckshot!" and "Coercion!" These had no relevancy to the Budget scheme; but they showed that the Irish members have not forgotten Mr. Forster, and that this was their hour of victory, rather than of the triumph of the Tories.

Lord Randolph Churchill threatened to go mad with joy. He wrung the hand of the impassive Rowland Winn, who regarded him with a kindly, curious smile, as if he were some wild animal. Mr. Gladstone had resumed his letter, and went on calmly writing whilst the clerk at the table proceeded to run through the Orders of the Day, as if nothing particular had happened. But the House was in no mood for business. Cries for the adjournment filled the House, and Mr. Gladstone, still holding his letter in one hand and the pen in the other, moved the adjournment, and the crowd surged through the doorway, the Conservatives still tumultuously cheering.

June 9. — "A dutiful communication." When, at twenty-five minutes past four, the following day, Mr. Gladstone entered, the House presented a crowded and animated appearance.

The Premier was received with hearty cheers from the Liberal side. Two minutes later Sir Michael Hicks-Beach entered, and took his seat on the front Opposition bench, an incident the Conservatives seized for a counter-demonstration, loudly cheering the right hon. baronet. At this time Sir Stafford Northeote, whose entrance had created no excitement, was in his place.

The clock had barely touched half-past four when Mr. Gladstone rose, his appearance at the table being hailed with renewed cheering from the Liberal side. He observed that as the questions on the paper referred chiefly to the business of the House, and were addressed to responsible Ministers, he thought it better to make a brief statement before they were reached. In consequence of the decision arrived at by the House early in the morning, the Cabinet had thought fit to submit a "dutiful communication" to her Majesty. It would, he added, be premature to state the nature of that communication, at which Mr. Healy, bubbling over with good-humour, jubilantly cried "Hear, hear!" but was immediately rebuked by loud and general cries of "Order!" Some short interval must elapse before the result of that communication could be made known to the House, and as it would be for the general interest to refrain from business in the meantime, he would move that the House at its rising adjourn till Friday.

June 10.—Popular unconcern. Not the least remarkable feature in the political crisis of the hour is the absence of public excitement. People go about their daily work and take their daily pleasures just as placidly as if the strongest Ministry of modern times had not suddenly disappeared, blown out of existence by a puff of wind from an unexpected quarter. It is true that at two o'clock yesterday morning, when the fact that the Government were actually defeated presented itself to the notice of the House of Commons, there was a remarkable scene. It lasted its ten minutes, and finally finished when the doors closed on the tumultuous throng which streamed out of the House, cheering and laughing as if every one was happy—the victors and the vanquished.

**Lord R. Churchill.** As far as public appearance goes, this was the last time Lord Randolph Churchill was visible, and possibly we shall never more see him in the same humour or the same attitude. Lord Randolph is a man who has much in character with Prince Hal. In his hot youth he will, for a small wager, race across Westminster Bridge what time Big Ben tolls midnight and the quarters that precede it. He will flout his political pastores and masters, and will lead Mr. Healy and Mr. Biggar in riotous disregard of the courtesies and decencies of Parliament. But when he comes into his inheritance, as now seems an imminent matter, we may expect to find him purge and live cleanly. There is a great deal more in Lord Randolph Churchill than meets the eye. His reckless manner covers a deep and serious purpose, and his natural abilities will enable him to gain it. Let us cherish that picture of the noble lord standing on the bench below the gangway, waving his hat over his head with one hand, whilst the other is held to his mouth in order the better to direct his triumphant shout towards the Treasury bench, where Mr. Gladstone sits quietly writing his letter. It is a spectacle the like of which we shall never look on more.

**A dip into the future.** One reason for the remarkable unanimity of satisfaction at the course events have taken is to be found in the general conviction that the term of Conservative power is strictly limited to the period of the general election, and that in the meantime they can do no serious harm. The Liberal majority in the House of Commons are still masters of the situation. They may be expected to deal generously with a party who, albeit for their own purposes, have come to the front, and in doing so have conferred a great favour on their political opponents. But if it could be supposed that Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill would conspire in office to carry out the principles openly avowed by them in opposition, and embroil this country with Russia, they would be bundled out of office with considerably more rapidity than they are now arriving at it. If they be content, for the sake of such honours and emoluments as even a temporary holding of office confers, to wind up the business of the session, they will lead a placid life, and will receive every consideration at the hands of the Opposition.

That will most probably be the line adopted. Where the difficulty will arise will be not in Russia, possibly not in Egypt, but in Ireland. It is no secret, in spite of Lord Richard Grosvenor's affidavit, that if there had been no Coercion Bill lying in the pathway there would have been no Government defeat on Tuesday morning. The Government have gone out, but they have not taken this difficulty with them—rather have left it in full force for the consideration of their successors. What the Conservatives will do with it is a matter that must so soon be settled that it is dangerous to prophesy. Nevertheless, I will dare the discredit of failure. I believe the Conservative Government will permit the Coercion Act to lapse, and will in this respect carry out the policy of Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke.

June 12.—A merry There was a great gathering inside and out of mob. the House of Commons to-day. The fallen Minister passed through a cheering crowd in Palace Yard to face another applauding throng in the House of Commons. He looked pale and worried, an aspect the more noticeable by comparison with the hilarious condition of every one else in the House. Never was there gathered a merrier crowd than this which had come to witness the last scene in the history of the strongest Ministry of modern times. It was reasonable enough that gentlemen to the left of the Speaker should be in high good-humour. Their day of triumph had come. They were on the verge of the wilderness through which they had toiled for five long years. For some was spread out the Canaan of the Treasury bench. For all was deliverance from the yoke that had so long galled them. That they should jest and laugh and make merry at every passing incident was natural enough. But they were, if possible, outdone in boisterous good-humour by gentlemen opposite. Nor was there any sign that the merriment was forced. It was unaffected joy at deliverance from a false position that had grown intolerable. In addition there was the natural gratification at the prospect of a change. Even the most rigid political fidelity cannot altogether resist a sense of satisfaction at the prospect of freedom from the eternal monotony of the faces that have for five years peopled the Treasury bench and the benches behind.

Sir W. Harcourt makes a mistake.

As early as a quarter-past four the front Opposition Bench was crowded to its fullest capacity. Since Tuesday morning the attendance in this part of the House has been unfailing. If offices are about to be redistributed, it is just as well that the former occupants should be in full view, so that there may be the minimum of inconvenience to their leader, supposing he should suddenly want them. By contrast, the Treasury bench was almost empty, Sir William Harcourt being the first Cabinet Minister to put in appearance. The Home Secretary was startled out of his ordinary equanimity when he entered the House. Hardly had his majestic figure passed the Chair when a sudden cheer went up. This was unexpected, but Sir William Harcourt could not help thinking that things were at last as they should be. The House had not been accustomed thus heartily to greet his appearance. It had, indeed, upon occasion been known to treat him contumeliously. But now he shared the fallen fortunes of his friends. He was about to quit the Treasury bench, whence he had so often risen with quip and quirk, and the barbed arrows of practised wit. The recognition of his personal popularity had been long in coming. But it had come at last, and Sir William Harcourt, with head modestly hung and a blush mantling his cheek, passed onward.

On reaching the Bench he was confronted by Lord Richard Grosvenor, who had entered from the doorway under the clock. Lord Richard was also smiling and blushing as if he had some proprietary right in this ovation. There was evidently a mistake somewhere, and the truth swiftly broke upon the Home Secretary's mind. These cheers were meant for the Ministerial whip, and were intended as a recognition on the part of the House of his consummate management of the division on Tuesday morning. This greeting of Lord Richard was the first ebullition of the fun that was bubbling in every quarter of the House. There were cheers of another kind when, on the stroke of half-past four, the Premier entered. But immediately afterwards the House got back to its bantering mood. Sir Charles Dilke, despatched by the Premier, crossed the floor, and seated himself by Sir Stafford Northcote. This is probably not an incident that will strike the outsider as rich in humorous suggestion. But the House took it as such, and laughed and cheered and

wagged its head as if Sir Charles Dilke and Sir Stafford Northcote had accomplished an excruciating joke. After this the fun grew apace. Mr. Winn and Lord Richard Grosvenor, walking out together, were loudly cheered. After a brief interval they returned, and once more the cheers and laughter broke forth.

A man of business. When, on Tuesday, Mr. Gladstone came down with the dark announcement of "a dutiful communication forwarded to Her Majesty, he had with great promptitude risen on the stroke of half-past four. It was half-past four now, and the cheering and laughter ceased in anticipation of his rising to make a further communication. But it was Sir Erskine May who appeared on the scene, and, just as if this were an ordinary Friday night, and nothing particular had happened, called out "Notices of Motion!" Sir Erskine has not sat at the table of the House of Commons for a generation without having acquired an imperturbability of manner which, on occasions like this, shines forth with rare radiance. On Tuesday morning he had greatly distinguished himself in this direction. The critical division had taken place in a crowded and excited House. Lord Randolph Churchill had come down from the bench on which he had stood and shouted, and was awaiting the next movement on the part of the Premier. Mr. Gladstone, however, was engrossed in the occupation of writing his letter to the Queen. It was of the utmost importance that Her Majesty should be informed of the course of the debate, and, by the exercise of great diligence, the Premier's letter would reach her some time on Wednesday evening. In the meanwhile Her Majesty might have received some inkling of what had taken place through the medium of the telegraph. But her chief source of information would be from a report furnished her by the Premier. So, whilst the throng of members, hoarse with shouting, sat and looked on, Mr. Gladstone, as we have seen, went on quietly writing as if he were in his own study.

It was then that Sir Erskine May, with great presence of mind, brought matters to a crisis. The next business on the paper was the second reading of the Crofters Bill. In ordinary circumstances, and supposing the Government had had a majority of fifty instead of being placed in a minority by twelve, it would have been the duty of the Minister in charge of the

Bill to mention a day for this stage. Accordingly, over the hushed and expectant House of Commons there floated the familiar sound of Sir Erskine May's voice, which, without a flutter of emotion, pronounced the words "Crofters Bill, second reading." Then a storm of indignation burst forth. Cries of "Adjourn, adjourn!" filled the House, and Mr. Gladstone, looking up from his letter, was quite surprised to find that something was expected from him after the vote just taken. The House was in too serious a mood to laugh on Tuesday, when Sir Erskine May thus proposed to go on with ordinary business. But it made up for it this afternoon, and Sir Erskine resumed his seat amid a burst of laughter that must have convinced him he was one of the most accomplished humorists of the day. After this it was natural enough that when Mr. Warton turned up as the first member with a notice of motion there was more laughter, renewed when Sir John Lubbock proposed "on this day four weeks" to call attention to the Declaration of Paris.

After all the exhilarating flashes of humour that had marked the opening of the proceedings, it might have been expected that the supply was exhausted. But Mr. Gladstone had his quota. Relating the course of events since Tuesday morning, he observed that the message containing the resignation of Ministers had reached Balmoral on the afternoon of the 10th. "And," he proceeded, "Her Majesty's reply—her gracious reply—was made upon the 11th, accepting the resignation of *Lord Salisbury*." This really was funny, for Mr. Gladstone had laid great emphasis on the graciousness of the reply of Her Majesty, implying a certain sense of gratification at this somewhat rapid dismissal of Lord Salisbury. When the laughter had subsided, Mr. Gladstone corrected himself, and went on to the end of his remarks, a little laboured in their construction, and delivered in that apologetic, deferential tone which he knows so well how to assume. Listening to him as he proceeded through the tortuous sentences, it was borne in upon the audience that they were assisting at an historic scene. This was probably the last speech of Mr. Gladstone as First Minister of the Crown in the present Parliament—possibly the last words he would ever speak from the Treasury bench.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### “THE STOP-GAP GOVERNMENT.”

Sir H. Giffard's great Expectations—Farewell to Sir Stafford Northcote—The fallen Minister—Changing Seats in the Commons—A Conservative Whip—Old Memories—Mr. C. Sykes raises a Storm—A Mystery—Prince Henry of Battenberg—Unchanged.

June 19.—Sir H. Giffard's great expectations.

Sir Hardinge Giffard walked up the floor of the House this afternoon with a rolling gait and a certain sea-dog air about him that indicated not only contentment of mind, but exceptional joyousness. From the first his connection with Parliamentary affairs has been exceedingly chequered. Before he was privileged to enter the House he vainly wooed many constituencies. When at last he found a harbour of refuge at Launceston, and presented himself at the table to be sworn in, there followed that memorable scene in which he, before a marvelling House, emptied numerous and capacious pockets in search of documentary proof of his election. After this came a long interval of comparative rest; and now fortune is once more playing with him. He was to have been Lord Chancellor in the new Conservative Government. In decent preparation therefor, he had returned many lucrative briefs, and had made preparations for giving up the seat so hardly won. Then came sudden and unexpected difficulties which threatened to smother the new Ministry before it was born. Sir Hardinge, with great presence of mind, recovered his scattered briefs, and in the turmoil of the occasion had no thought of pity for his junior brethren, who had just time to congratulate themselves upon their unexpected good-fortune, when it was withdrawn.

But under the affectation of light-heartedness with which the Lord Chancellor-designate, radiant in white waistcoat, rolled up the floor of the House, the keen observer might have detected a line of care ruled under the restless eyes. The briefs were all right. But what about Launceston? Under the impression that he was to be Lord Chancellor he had despatched Mr.

Webster to his old borough with fullest and heartiest recommendation. Supposing, with that capriciousness on the part of constituencies with which he was familiar, Launceston were to take a fancy to Mr. Webster, and when the critical moment came, should declare their preference for him as against the sitting member! Here was a project black enough to affright the stoutest heart. That the Woolsack should elude his grasp at the moment he almost touched it was sad enough. But to drop the substance while in pursuit of the shadow, to lose Launceston and not to gain the Lord Chancellorship, this were desolation indeed!

Members pressed round the Lord Chancellor that was to have been, and offered him their congratulations and their condolences. Finding him in such rollicking humour, they, too, grew facetious, and Sir Hardinge sat for some moments the centre of what appeared a merry group. But it was a hollow affair, and as one by one his companions dropped off Sir Hardinge, furtively looking round, took an opportunity to withdraw, and for the rest of the brief sitting the stately figure which may yet adorn the Woolsack was seen in the House of Commons no more. There are times when the human soul has a great yearning for solitude, when even the companionship of the most trusted and esteemed friend jars upon the strained nerves.

Farewell to Sir S. Northcote. Amid the bustle and excitement of the sitting even Sir Hardinge Giffard was hardly missed. Sir Stafford Northcote came in at half-past four, and was greeted with a cheer which, commencing on the Conservative benches, went ringing round the House, testifying to the esteem —almost reaching personal affection—in which the leader of the Conservative Opposition is held. It was thought Sir Stafford Northcote had already passed out of the region with which so long and so honourable a portion of his life is associated. He had left the House last Monday beaten down and depressed, perhaps not so much by the vivacious attack of Lord Randolph Churchill, to which he is accustomed, as by the desertion of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, an incident that has no parallel in recent Parliamentary history, unless we go back to the session of 1874, when, Mr. Gladstone being generally supposed to be

irretrievably down, Sir W. Harcourt gleefully jumped upon him. Within twenty-four hours of Monday's sitting it was announced that Sir Stafford Northcote was to be made a peer, and members regretted that his latest recollections of their House should be connected with a lamentable scene. Now he was fortuitously back again, and Liberals and Conservatives vied with each other in doing him honour. It was felt that in losing Sir Stafford Northcote the House of Commons parts company with a statesman who in most troublous times has never deviated from that high standard which the English people are proud to see their rulers maintain. In times when rowdyism has been rampant Sir Stafford Northcote has always preserved a courteous bearing. He has never misrepresented a political opponent, never garbled facts for the sake of promoting argument, never stooped to subterfuge, never deserted a friend or dealt unfairly with an enemy. The House of Commons remembered these things when to-night Sir Stafford was discovered in the endeavour quietly to take his seat, and it cheered him as he has never before been cheered.

The fallen Scarcely had the echo of these welcoming shouts  
Minister. died away than they rose again. Mr. Gladstone was discovered making his way to the Treasury bench. Like the Lord Chancellor-expectant, Mr. Gladstone had recognised the festive occasion by putting on a white waistcoat, adding the adornment of a great white rose. But he differed from Sir Hardinge Giffard in general aspect. He was smiling, like the ex-Solicitor-General, but the smile was not belied by anxious look, or other evidence of a perturbed mind. Since a vote in the House of Commons on the Budget Bill gave him the opportunity of abandoning office, Mr. Gladstone has plucked up health and spirits in a manner almost miraculous. On the Monday night when Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's resolution was under discussion, he sat upon the Treasury bench with haggard eyes, flushed face, and restless body. Whilst Sir Stafford Northcote was mildly arguing the matter, he could hardly contain himself in his wrath. He flung himself about on the bench, and accompanied Sir Stafford's remarks by a running commentary. To-night he was as cool and contented as if he had won a great victory instead of having suffered a great fall.

His manner, as compared with that of Monday week, was the difference in the temperament and bearing of a man who has passed through the hot stages of fever into the blissful coolness of convalescence. He is ten years younger in looks, and bears himself as if Egypt were a dream and Afghanistan a province in fairyland.

June 21.—  
Changing seats in the  
Commons.

The House was again full to-day in eager anticipation of further development of the Ministerial crisis. The change of Government being now legally effected, Liberals and Conservatives changed sides, an event out of which much innocent amusement was got. The Irish members retained their old places to the left of the Speaker, and were down early in the endeavour to secure every coign of vantage preserved by them throughout the existence of the late Government. At five o'clock Mr. Gladstone arrived, and on assuming the seat of leader of the Opposition was loudly cheered. Mr. Rowland Winn presenting himself, was welcomed with loud cheers from the Conservatives. He moved that the House at its rising adjourn till Friday. There would, he said, be no business on that day except the issue of writs, and a further adjournment is to take place till Monday, the 6th July.

Mr. Gladstone presented himself at the table with a bundle of manuscript, and, in accordance with his undertaking, proceeded to read copies of the correspondence that had passed between the Marquis of Salisbury and himself through the Queen. The first was dated the 17th of June, when Lord Salisbury, "with humble duty to your Majesty," declares it indispensable that before the Conservatives accept office an undertaking shall be given by the leaders of the Opposition that they will support the new Ministry, first in securing for them as Government nights all sittings of the House for which Supply shall have been put down, and secondly that if the House declines to accept the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer the leaders of the Liberal party will approve the expedient of issuing Exchequer bonds or making other temporary arrangements for the deficit. "Without the help of the Liberal leaders," Lord Salisbury said, "the Conservatives could perform no useful service to your Majesty."

This letter, having been sent via Windsor, did not reach

Mr. Gladstone till eight o'clock on the evening of the 18th. In reply, he immediately wrote expressing the belief that there was on the part of the Liberal majority no disposition to embarrass the Government. At the same time he declined to enter into specific pledges of assistance without knowing the nature of the measures to which they would apply. On the next day Lord Salisbury reported to the Queen that his political friends were unanimously of opinion that Mr. Gladstone's letter gave no pledge that he and his friends would not embarrass the Government. On this same day Mr. Gladstone, being at Windsor, drew up a memorandum, which he submitted to the Queen, asking whether Lord Salisbury could suggest any amendment to this proposal, adding to the declaration made by him that there was no intention of embarrassing the new Ministry, and that he would act in the spirit of the arrangement by which the Seats Bill was carried. Mr. Gladstone added that it was impossible to give the specific pledges demanded.

On the 19th June (last Friday) Lord Salisbury repeated the demand for the two specific engagements described. On the 20th (Saturday) Mr. Gladstone repeated that it would be contrary to the duty of the Liberal Ministers to compromise the liberties of the House of Commons by giving the specific undertaking desired, at the reading of which passage the intense silence hitherto maintained was broken by a cheer from the Liberals. Lord Salisbury, replying on the same day, complained that Mr. Gladstone's letter still contained no definite assurance of support, and offered no security against a recurrence of the present difficulty. On the 21st (Sunday last) Mr. Gladstone, whilst refusing to enter into argument, and declaring that there was no idea of withholding Ways and Means, shortly repeated that he remained without the power to give specific pledges. Here the correspondence ended, and Mr. Gladstone resumed his seat amid cheers from the Liberals.

June 26.—A Conservative whip. To Mr. Rowland Winn, life, in ordinary times an unimpressive, respectable procession of events, has recently become a wild dance. The change began early on the Tuesday morning that seems so far off when Lord Randolph Churchill, jumping upon the bench to wave his hat, came down to shake hands with the Conservative whip. The

strongest Government of modern times had been beaten in the division lobby, and would probably resign office. The beating was nothing. That had happened before. But the going out and making way for their political opponents was decidedly new, and accounted for the wild uproar on the benches where the Parnellites mixed with English county gentlemen, and Mr. Biggar echoed Mr. Chaplin's cheer with a shrill, irrelevant cry of "Buckshot!"

As Mr. Winn stood some paces off the table with a paper in his hand containing the fateful figures, something like a tremor shook his frame. Again and again the cheers uprose, the nascent Secretary of State for India leading them from his elevated post on the corner bench. Mr. Winn has at these epochs a gentle, patient, deprecating way of turning his head and regarding his excited friends which is pretty to see. Shouting is no particular use that he knows of. He does not remember when he jumped upon a bench with hat in one hand and handkerchief in the other shouting himself hoarse. But if they *will* do it he must wait till they finish. He does not wish to impose his will upon them; only if they could get it over soon and let him read out the figures he would take it as a personal favour.

All this was written on Mr. Winn's face on that memorable Tuesday morning when, all unknowing that that was the last time he would ever "tell" a division in the House of Commons, he stood at the table, from time to time casting over his right shoulder a look of gentle inquiry. Once more, and for the last time, he appeared in a prominent position in the assembly in which he has been for so many years a familiar though unobtrusive figure. This was on Wednesday, when he stood at the table to move the issue of writs for boroughs and counties vacated by the appointment of Ministers. Few, if any, then knew what was in store for him. On no prophetic soul dawned the vision of Mr. Winn stalking about the corridors of another place with a coronet on his lofty brow, and his tall figure draped in the red robe of a peer of the United Kingdom. Still he was the symbol of victory. The very position where he stood indicated the great deal that had happened since he last halted before the Mace waiting to read out the figures of the division on Sir M. Hicks-Beach's amendment to the Budget Bill. He

now presented himself, standing on the right-hand side of the Speaker. On the other side of the table sat Mr. Gladstone, smiling and prosperous looking, the centre of a happy throng of ex-Ministers, the only moody man among them being Mr. Childers, who, in truth, should have been most joyous, for it was through his action that deliverance came. Mr. Winn blushed a rosy red as the cheers rang through the House. But he is long trained to control his feelings, and there was no faltering in his voice as he moved the issue of the writs.

*Old memories.* Not even when he moved that "the Speaker do order the Clerk of the Crown to issue his writ for the election of a member to serve in the Mid-Division of the County of Kent, in the place of Sir William Hart-Dyke," did Mr. Winn's remarkable self-possession desert him. And yet how strange a thing was this he was propounding! In years gone by, many a time and oft have he and Sir William Hart-Dyke heard the chimes at midnight (and, for the matter of that, long past midnight) whilst waiting to marshal the Conservative forces against the passionate inroads of an impotent Liberal Opposition. In those days Mr. Winn was the junior, graver and more solemn by comparison with his chirpy chief. When Mr. Disraeli's Government was scattered to the winds after the election of 1880, Sir William Hart-Dyke arrived at the conclusion that he had had enough of official participation in polities. But Mr. Winn gravely consented to go forward with the thankless work. There was a deeper tinge in his gravity, an added stoniness in his stare. To see him "counting" Mr. Newdegate came nearer than ever to the level of a religious function. But he went forward steadily with his work, putting all his heart and soul into it, and always preserving an unmoved countenance, whether the Government majority were a hundred or only three, and even when it was transformed into a minority of twelve. Now, suddenly, at the time when the pathway of the Liberal Government had seemed smooth to the verge of the dissolution, he was standing at the Treasury bench, with Mr. Gladstone, sitting in opposition, listening to him whilst he moved a writ for the county division represented by Sir William Hart-Dyke. Behind him, if the House could only see it, stood the shadowy

figure of Lord Salisbury, with hand outstretched, placing on his head the coronet, and hailing him Baron Nostell, of Nostell Abbey; whilst Sir William Hart-Dyke, with a light heart, is about to undertake the task which wrecked Mr. Forster, whitened the hair of Mr. Trevelyan, and threatened to disturb the serenity of Mr. Campbell-Bannerman.

Whilst Mr. Winn has shown a great aptitude for House of Commons life, and leaves behind him pleasant and most friendly memories, there is no doubt he was born for the House of Lords. At first it will be a little hard. The heart of the old whip will yearn after the lobby of the House of Commons, with its continual bustle and its frequent bell-ringing. Also the ridiculously early hours of the House of Lords will be embarrassing to a man who has been accustomed to see the lights out in the Commons at whatever hour the cry of "Who goes home?" might echo through the corridors. But though he may never again tread the floor of the House of Commons or stand at the wicket and count Mr. Newdegate, he may sit in the gallery over the clock and watch Lord Richard Grosvenor and Lord Kensington come in with the figures, and critically eye his successor, Mr. Akers-Douglas. Perhaps sometimes in the House of Lords they will let him "tell" in a division, though that will be a poor exchange for the stern delight of the real fights in the Commons—as moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine. To tap elderly gentlemen on the shoulder with a white stick what time the figures of the Conservative majority mount up may be all very well for people accustomed to nothing else. But it is poor play for a veteran whip who has lived through the varying excitement of successive terms of unshaken victory or unbroken defeat.

A division in the House of Lords on any party question is about as exciting as changing a sovereign. One knows he will get twenty shillings for the coin, and the Conservative whip in the Lords knows that he will have a certain majority. Where can Lord Nostell look in the House of Lords for a recurrence of the joyous tumult that has often throbbed around Mr. Rowland Winn in days gone by? Can the House of Lords promise anything approaching the scene in the House of Commons between midnight and morning of the 25th of April, 1875, on the memorable division on Dr. Kenealy's motion for a Royal

Commission to inquire into the conduct of the judges in the Tichborne case? Four hundred and thirty-three members, Whigs, Tories, Liberals, and Conservatives, trooped in from the left lobby, whilst from the right issued a single figure, the one supporter of the redoubtable Doctor—Major O'Gorman. Here was an unprecedented thing that would have perilled the self-possession of an ordinary man. But Mr. Rowland Winn was equal to the occasion. When the cheers and laughter had subsided, his voice resounded through the still House: "The *Aye* to the right *is* one, the *Noes* to the left *are* 433." On an occasion like this it is only Mr. Winn who might have been counted upon strictly to preserve grammatical accuracy. Any one else would have used the usual plural formula, "The *Ayes* to the right." But then, as ever, Mr. Winn kept his head. In the stormiest division, whether the majority were 100 for his side or 130 against him, Mr. Winn was ever the same, with figure drawn stiffly to attention, passionless face looking out nowhither, unconcerned amongst the tumult, as the Needles stand regardless whilst the mad Atlantic tries to drive its waters at a sweep through the narrow English Channel.

July 31.—Mr. C. It would be idle to attempt to deny that it was Sykes raises a storm. Mr. Christopher Sykes who was indirectly—and, it is willingly admitted, unconsciously—the occasion of the remarkable scene that took place in the House of Commons to-night in the matter of the naturalisation of Prince Henry of Battenberg. Mr. Sykes entered the House just after questions were over, and, having a few remarks to offer to Baron Henry de Worms, it occurred to him that they might be delivered standing in the gangway. But that is a gross breach of the etiquette of the House. An hon. member may sit on the steps of the gangway and converse at will with friends to right or left. But if, when the Speaker is in the Chair, he presumes to enter into conversation whilst in a standing position, he instantly becomes the object of marked and unpleasant attention. At the moment when Mr. Sykes appeared upon the scene the House was in the most docile and unemotional mood. The questions were disposed of in the business-like manner that has come into vogue since the late Opposition crossed the floor of

the House. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill was the ~~the~~ order of the day, and every one was waiting to go into committee. Something was going on at the table between Sir Erskine May and the Speaker. They were enjoying what seemed to be a private colloquy, in which only Mr. Stuart-Wortley manifested interest. But Mr. Sykes speedily brought about a transformation scene.

The breach of etiquette was first perceived by the Parnellites, who are well known for their uncompromising devotion to order. Only a night or two earlier Mr. Callan had vindicated courtesy of manner and gentleness of speech by summoning Mr. Bright to the Bar of the House on a charge of breach of privilege. Mr. Callan, it is true, did not make much by the motion. Mr. Bright reiterated the declarations complained of, declined to withdraw a word of them, and even extorted from the Irish members themselves an admission of the general truth of his indictment. But when a passion is deeply seated in the human mind its current is not permanently interfered with by a temporary check. Here was Mr. Christopher Sykes standing, over six feet high, in the gangway opposite, talking to Baron de Worms whilst the Speaker was in the Chair and the Mace on the table.

Mr. Biggar saw him first, and thus began : "Order, Order, Order!" The cry was taken up by the Parnellites, and members, startled by the interruption and not immediately seeing what it alluded to, hurriedly looked about. Was there a peer in the gallery with his hat on? Was somebody crossing between a member on his legs and the Speaker in the chair? Was some member, regardless of the best interests of the British Constitution, standing a few inches inside the Bar? Was somebody reading a newspaper? Or was somebody trying to catch the Speaker's eye from the cross-benches? None of these fearful things were happening. But there, plainly in view when attention was properly directed, was Mr. Christopher Sykes standing in the gangway. The cry from the Irish benches was gradually taken up, and grew in intensity as Mr. Sykes looked round and wondered what was the matter. Some one pulled his coat-tail and drew his attention to his breach of the rules, whereupon he suddenly, with swift movement, dropped down into a sitting attitude.

A mystery. The House, thus roused from a state of apathy, and hugely enjoying its own little joke, looked about for fresh victims of its humour. There was evidently something going on at the table of more than usual interest. Sir Erskine May and the Speaker frequently hob and nob over Bills coming down from the Lords, but not often to the extent of to-night's performance. There was, too, something odd in Mr. Stuart-Wortley's manner. He was evidently a party to the conversation. But why should he shrink behind the Speaker's chair, peeping out occasionally to throw in an observation, and again retreating? Beginning to listen, members below the gangway on the Liberal side heard the name of Prince Henry of Battenberg. This was enough, and they pricked up their ears with alarming alacrity.

Prince Henry of Battenberg. "Prince Henry of Battenberg Naturalisation Bill," said the Speaker, continuing the conversation with Sir Erskine May.

Mr. Stuart-Wortley, bobbing his head out from behind the chair, said something inaudible.

"Question is that this Bill be read a first time," said the Speaker. Sir Wilfrid Lawson was on his legs in a moment.

"What is the Bill?" he asked, amid cheers from the Radicals. "Never heard anything of it. Does it mean money?"

This was a shrewd suggestion that instantly brought the Radicals to the front. Their sole acquaintance with Prince Henry of Battenberg, as far as it had gone, consisted of voting various sums of money.

The panic-stricken Ministers said never a word. Mr. Stuart-Wortley, cautiously protruding his head, next moved that the Bill be read a second time. This was too much for the Radicals, and Sir Wilfrid Lawson was vociferously cheered when he insisted upon knowing more about the measure before granting extraordinary facilities for carrying it through.

"What's all this hurry for?" he asked. "What better will he be when he's naturalised?"

There was evidently more in this Bill than met the eye. It might be called naturalisation, but, a German princeling being concerned, it could only mean money. Still no answer came from the Treasury bench, and Mr. Stuart-Wortley disappeared

altogether behind the Speaker's chair, leaving the Speaker and Sir Erskine May to face the rising storm. The Speaker, with great presence of mind, declared the Bill read a second time, and once more Mr. Stuart-Wortley's head was observed cautiously emerging from behind the Chair, whilst a trembling voice said—

“I beg to move, Mr. Speaker, that you do now leave the Chair.”

A roar louder and angrier than that which had startled Mr. Christopher Sykes burst forth from the Radical camp. Here was a Bill which, whatever it might be called, must mean putting money in the purse of a German princeling, passing all its stages before their very eyes! The ordinary custom of the House of Commons is for a Bill to be brought in, after due notice, to be ordered to be printed, to have the second reading taken after an interval, and, in proper sequence and with full notice, to achieve the remaining stages of going into Committee, dealing with the Bill in Committee, taking the report stage, and finally the third reading. Why this suspicious haste for the Prince Henry of Battenberg Naturalisation Bill?

Was it even printed? Mr. Broadhurst sternly demanded. Sir R. Cross tremblingly observed that it was not usual to print these Bills.

This made matters all the worse. A Bill that was not printed to be galloped through all its forms in three minutes, with the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department lurking behind the Speaker's Chair, was more than could be stood by the representatives of the people.

“May I ask,” said Mr. Arthur O'Connor blandly, “whether the passing of the Bill is a condition precedent to an appointment of the Prince to a high command in the army?”

That was it. Sir Wilfrid Lawson knew that there was “money in it,” by whatever circuitous route the hand reached the national purse. The Prince was to be naturalised, and then placed in an important and lucrative command, to the detriment of the claims of veterans like Sir Walter Barttelot, Sir Alexander Gordon, Sir George Balfour, and even Captain Ritchie, who once commanded a company of the Surrey Militia.

Lashed into fury by these considerations, the Radicals raved and stormed, and the knees of Mr. Stuart-Wortley shook behind the Speaker's Chair when he thought how in another minute he

would have to put out his head and move that the clauses be agreed to. The Speaker, seeing the hour of his own deliverance at hand, hastily put the question that he should leave the chair, and, declaring it carried, walked off. Sir Arthur Otway, with lips firmly set and head erect, walked into the seat of the Chairman of Committees, as he would, if duty called, walk up to the cannon's mouth. Things seemed to have been sliding along at a fearsome pace. But the Radicals would have it out in Committee, fighting all the clauses.

"Clause 1," said the Chairman. "Question is, that this clause be added to the Bill.

"Read! read!" shouted the Radicals, determined to have a bit of fun to start with. It would be time enough seriously to obstruct on the remaining clauses. But it turned out that there was only one clause, and they had missed the opportunity of objecting to it. The Chairman of Committees left the table, the Speaker glided back into his chair, Mr. Stuart-Wortley, seizing the opportunity, moved that the Bill be read a third time, and before the Radicals could recover their breath, the thing was done. As for Mr. Christopher Sykes, the guiltless originator of all the trouble, he had vanished from sight. As soon as he had mastered the fact that a Serene Highness was being attacked, he seized his hat and hurriedly left the House.

Aug. 5. — Un- Looking upon the House of Commons at one  
changed. o'clock this morning, it seemed as if the hand  
of Time had put back the clock five weeks, and that all that had  
happened in the meantime was but a dream. Here was Mr.  
Healy shaking his fist at the Treasury bench and reciting the  
sorrows of District-Inspector Murphy of the Irish Constabulary.  
Everything, with one exception, was precisely the same as it  
used to be. The Parnellites mustered in fair numbers, and  
loudly cheered all the noisier passages of Mr. Healy's speech.  
When he humorously remarked that "the Speaker would not  
allow him to call Mr. Campbell-Bannerman a liar," there went  
up such a shout of appreciative laughter from the Irish camp  
that it woke up Mr. Warton, asleep at his post of duty on  
the back benches. In other parts of the House there were  
chiefly empty benches, with here and there a member yawning  
to keep himself awake.

Mr. Parnell was in his place—an exceptional circumstance, which denoted the importance of the occasion. It was further notable that the Irish leader had arrayed himself in marvellous manner. It is among his peculiarities that he should flout the Saxon by sudden changes of fashion in wearing (or not wearing) his hair. No one who was present will forget the thrill, partly of surprise partly of fear, when one night some three years ago Mr. Parnell suddenly appeared with the crown of his head clean shaven. The night before he had been in his place with a full allowance of hair. The next night he came down with a shaven pate. Now he has gone to the other extreme. His hair, brushed back behind his ears, is permitted to fall upon his shoulders, turning up with a mechanical curl. His appearance is rendered more striking by a happy choice of colours in his dress. The memorable yellowy-brown trousers are draped by a long-skirted black coat, the figure being crowned by a "pot-hat" of rich brown hue. On the whole, the dress is a triumph of laborious art, giving Mr. Parnell an appearance which is a cross between Mr. Oscar Wilde and a scarecrow.

Where the difference in the aspect of the House came in was on the Treasury bench. All are gone—the old familiar faces which we have looked upon through the partial sunshine and the successive storms of five years. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach sits where Mr. Gladstone used to lounge. Sir R. Cross smirks from the place whence Sir W. Harcourt was wont to survey the House with an aggravating air of superiority. Lord Hartington has disappeared. Sir Charles Dilke no longer briskly moves between the door and the Treasury bench, and Mr. Chamberlain's orchid gleams on the other side of the table. Yet the Irish members go on in exactly the same way, making, as it seems, the very same speeches, equally truculent and not less abusive than when the Liberals sat to the right of the Speaker. For many days they have been marvellously quiet, and business has proceeded by leaps and bounds. To-night they broke out, and disturbed the serenity of the Ministry with proof that a change of Government makes no difference to them. To-night it was District Inspector Murphy, next Friday it will be the Maamtrasna murder case. The choice of subjects is growing very limited. Time was when every night had its fresh topic. But nothing new seems to happen now, and the Parnellites are fain to dish up for the

twentieth time morsels that once might have been toothsome. There is not a messenger in the House who could not repeat the story of Inspector Murphy backwards ; and yet Mr. Healy, Mr. Sexton, and Mr. Parnell go in for it with as much freshness and vigour as if they were for the first time introducing the subject to public notice.

In early days this case had a peculiar interest for the House of Commons. To have the Parnellites championing the cause of a police officer was something marvellous. Two years ago Inspector Murphy was included in the general indictment of the representatives of order in Ireland which night after night the Parnellites were accustomed to lay before the House. Last October he was dismissed the force. Lord Spencer, as head of the Executive Government, had approved the proceedings ; and thereupon Mr. Murphy, but yesterday hated as a policeman, was championed as a martyr. He flitted all through the autumn session, dividing attention with the varying fate of the Franchise Bill. He came in fresh with the business that opened in February, has come and gone through the session, and to-night was brought up in great force to make joyous the lives of the new Ministry. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, like a wise man, had gone home—fled at the very approach of the terrible ex-policeman. But Mr. Smith stayed on, and so did Sir R. Cross. Lord Randolph Churchill turned aside for a moment from the affairs of India to consider this case. Sir William Hart-Dyke retreated to the end of the bench, and tried to look as if he, of all men, were least interested in the matter, whilst Mr. Plunket wasted twenty minutes of his graceful eloquence in discussing the matter. Every man on the bench, the only full one in the House, was horribly fagged, and Her Majesty's Ministers in the aggregate looked as if they had been in office five years instead of a space of time considerably less than five weeks.

Aug. 11.      Parliament prorogued.

## CALENDAR OF THE SESSION.

OCTOBER, 1884.

23. *Thurs.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Amendment (Law in Ireland). *Mr. Harrington.* Debate adjourned. 1st Debate.

24. *Fri.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Amendment (Law in Ireland). 2nd Debate.

27. *Mon.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Ditto, ditto, 3rd Debate.

28. *Tues.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Ditto, ditto. Division thereon—For, 48. Against, 219. 4th Debate.

29. *Wed.*—H.M. Speech. Observations (South Africa). *Sir H. Holland.* 5th Debate.

30. *Thurs.*—H. M. Speech. Address. Amendment (Speeches, &c., of President of Board of Trade). *Lord R. Churchill.* Division—For, 178. Against, 214. 6th Debate.

31. *Fri.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Amendment (Commercial, &c., Depression). *Mr. MacIver.* Division—For, 67. Against, 86. 7th Debate.

NOVEMBER.

3. *Mon.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Amendment (Juries, Ireland). *Mr. Sexton.* 8th Debate.

4. *Tues.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Amendment (Juries, Ireland). Division—For, 34. Against, 140. Amendment (Affairs in Bechuanaland). *Mr. Gorst.* withdrawn. Address agreed to. 9th Debate.

5. *Wed.*—H.M. Speech. Address. Amendment (Egypt). *Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett.* negatived. Report agreed to. Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill. Debate on 2nd Reading. Mr. O'Donnell suspended. Debate adjourned.

6. *Thurs.*—Representation Bill. Amendment (Redistribution of Seats). *Mr. E. Stanhope.* Debate adjourned.

7. *Fri.*—Ditto, ditto. Division on Amendment—For, 232. Against, 372. Bill committed.

10. *Mon.*—Ditto, ditto. Committee. Bill reported.

11. *Tues.*—Ditto, ditto. Read 3<sup>rd</sup>. Poor Law Guardians (Ireland) Bill. Committee. Bill reported.

13. *Thurs.*—Supply: Army Supplementary Estimates. *The Marquis of Hartington.* Division—For, 78. Against, 31.

14. *Fri.*—Motion. Crofters, &c. (Scotland). *Mr. Macfarlane.* Amended and agreed to.

17. *Mon.*—Ways and Means. Income Tax Resolutions. *The Chancellor of the Exchequer.* Agreed to.

20. *Thurs.*—Supply: Report.

21. *Fri.*—House of Lords. Motion, *Mr. Labouchere.* For, 71. Against, 145. Income Tax Bill. Read 2<sup>nd</sup>.

22. *Sat.*—Ways and Means. Report. Income Tax Bill. Committee. Amendment, *Mr. Hubbard,* negatived. Bill reported.

24. *Mon.*—Income Tax Bill. Read 3<sup>rd</sup>. House adjourned till Monday next.

DECEMBER.

1. *Mon.*—Redistribution of Seats Bill. *Mr. Gladstone.* Ordered.

2. *Tues.*—H.M. Navy. Statement, *Sir T. Brassey.*

3. *Wed.*—Elections (Hours of Poll) Bill. *Mr. Elliot.* Read 2<sup>nd</sup>.

4. *Thurs.*—Redistribution Bill, *Mr. Gladstone.* Read 2<sup>nd</sup> and committed. Elections (Hours of Poll) Bill. Committed.

6. *Sat.*—Representation Bill. Royal Assent. House adjourned till Thursday, 19th February.

FEBRUARY, 1885.

19. *Thurs.*—Egypt. Ministerial Statement, *Mr. Gladstone.*

*Fri.*—Army Reserve Force. Message from H.M.

Parliamentary Elections (Redistribution) Bill. Motion giving precedence thereto, *Mr. Gladstone.* Division—For, 225. Against, 15.

Supply: Civil Service (Supplementary) Estimates.

23. *Mon.*—Egypt and the Soudan. Vote of Censure, *Sir S. Northcote.* Amendment, *Mr. J. Morley.* 1st Debate.

24. *Tues.*—Orders of the Day. Notice to give priority of adjourned Debate on Egypt, &c., *Mr. Gladstone.* Mr. Speaker directed Mr. W. Redmond to discontinue his speech. Amendment proposed, *Mr. A. O'Connor.* Mr. Speaker enforces the Standing Order for "Putting the Question." Motion for the Suspension of Mr. O'Brien for disorderly interruption. Division—For, 244. Against, 20. Question put, "That the Question be now put." Division—For, 207. Against, 46. Question put on Amendment. Division—For, 12. Against, 235. Main Question put. Division—For, 222. Against, 19.

Egypt and the Soudan. Vote of Censure. 2nd Debate.

25. *Wed.*—Private Bill Legislation Bill, *Mr. Craig-Sellar.* 2nd Reading. Division on Amendment, *Sir J. Peace.*—For, 160. Against, 58.

26. *Thurs.*—Egypt and the Soudan. Vote of Censure. 3rd Debate.

27. *Fri.*—Ditto. 4th Debate. Division on original Question — For, 288. Against, 302. Division on Amendment, *Mr. J. Morley*—For, 112. Against, 455. Division on Amendment, *Lord G. Hamilton*—For, 277. Against, 299.

## MARCH.

2. *Mon.*—Army Reserve Force. Message from H.M. Address in Answer. Amendment, *Mr. Labouchere*. Division—For, 12. Against, 149. Address agreed to. Parliamentary Elections Bill. Debate on going into Committee. Instruction, *Sir J. Lubbock*. 1st Debate.

3. *Tues.*—Adjournment. Motion. (Rulings of Mr. Speaker), *Mr. Sexton*. Ruled out of order by Mr. Speaker. Parliamentary Elections Bill. Debate on going into Committee. Instructions, *Sir J. Lubbock*. Division—For, 31. Against, 134. Amendment (on the Increase of Numbers of House), *Sir J. Hay*. Division—For, 25. Against, 132. 2nd Debate.

4. *Wed.* Parliamentary Elections Bill. Debate on going into Committee. 3rd Debate.

5. *Thurs.*—Supply: Navy and Civil Services. Supplementary Estimates.

6. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Elections Bill. Bill considered in Committee. 1st Sitting.

9. *Mon.*—Supply: Army (Additional Number) Supplementary Estimates. East India Expenses (Soudan). Resolution, *Mr. J. K. Cross*. Division—For, 88. Against, 23.

10. *Tues.*—Adjournment. Motion (Bengal Tenancy Bill), *Sir H. Maxwell*. Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 2nd Sitting.

11. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 3rd do.

12. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Services. Supplementary Estimates.

13. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 11th Sitting.

13. *Mon.*—Army Reserve. Message from H.M. Address, *The Marquis of Hartington*. Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 12th Sitting.

14. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 13th do.

15. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 14th do.

16. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 15th do.

17. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 16th do.

20. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates.

21. *Tues.*—Naval, &c., Operations. Vote of Credit, *Mr. Gladstone*.

12. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Services. Supplementary Estimates.

13. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 4th Sitting.

16. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates. Amendment (Hired Transports), *Dr. Cameron*. State of Navy. Observations, Statement, *Sir T. Brassey*. Civil Services. Vote on account.

17. *Tues.*—Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 5th Sitting.

18. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 6th Sitting.

19. *Thurs.*—Supply: Army Estimates. Statement, *The Marquis of Hartington*.

20. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 7th Sitting.

23. *Mon.*—Adjournment. Motion (Egyptian Convention), *Sir Stafford Northcote*. Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 8th Sitting.

24. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 9th do.

25. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 10th do.

26. *Thurs.*—Army, &c., Reserve Forces. Message from H.M. Egyptian Loan. Committee thereon.

27. *Fri.*—Ditto. 2nd Sitting.

30. *Mon.*—Supply: Civil Services. Ladies' Gallery. Motion, *Mr. S. Buxton*. Division—For, 75. Against, 121. Observations. Royal Irish Constabulary, &c. Telegraph Acts Amendment Bill, *Mr. Shaw-Lefevre*. Brought in.

31. *Tues.*—Adjournment. Easter Recess. Observations. Central Asia, *Sir Stafford Northcote*. War in the Soudan, &c.

## APRIL.

9. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates. Egyptian Loan Bill. Read 2<sup>d</sup>.

10. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 11th Sitting.

13. *Mon.*—Army Reserve. Message from H.M. Address, *The Marquis of Hartington*. Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 12th Sitting.

14. *Tues.*—Ditto. Ditto. 13th do.

15. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 14th do.

16. *Thurs.*—Ditto. Ditto. 15th do.

17. *Fri.*—Ditto. Ditto. 16th do.

20. *Mon.*—Supply: Navy Estimates.

21. *Tues.*—Naval, &c., Operations. Vote of Credit, *Mr. Gladstone*.

Parliamentary Elections Bill. Committee. 17th Sitting. Bill reported.

22. *Wed.*—Sunday Liquor Traffic (No. 2) Bill, *Mr. Campbell-Bannerman*. 2nd Reading. Division—For, 87. Against, 28.

23. *Thurs.*—Supply: Civil Service Estimates.

24. *Fri.*—Registration of Voters (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.

27. *Mon.*—Supply: Naval, &c., Operations. Vote of Credit. *Mr. Gladstone's* Speech. Civil Service Estimates.

28. *Tues.*—Parliamentary Elections Bill. Report. 1st Debate.

29. *Wed.*—Ditto. 2nd Debate.

30. *Thurs.*—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, *Mr. Childers*.

## MAY.

1. *Fri.*—Registration of Voters (Ireland) Bill. Committee. 2nd Sitting. Bill reported. Registration of Voters (Scotland) Bill. Committee. Bill reported.

4. *Mon.*—Vote of Credit. Report.

5. *Tues.*—Registration (Occupation Voters) Bill. Committee. 1st Sitting.

6. *Wed.*—Ditto. Ditto. 2nd Sitting.

7. *Thurs.*—Supply: Army Estimates. Registration (Occupation Voters) Bill. Committee. 3rd Sitting. Bill reported.

8. *Fri.*—Parliamentary Elections Bill. Report. 3rd Debate. Bill to be read 3<sup>d</sup>.

11. *Mon.*—Soudan. Ministerial Statements, *The Marquis of Hartington*. Consolidated Fund (No. 3) Bill. Second Reading. Amendment, The Policy of the Government, *Lord Geo. Hamilton*. Division—For, 260. Against, 290. Parliamentary Elections Bill. Read 3<sup>d</sup>.

12. *Tues.*—Registration (Occupation Voters) Bill. Report. Bill Read 3<sup>d</sup>.

13. *Wed.*—Ascension Day. Motion regarding Sitting of Committees, *Mr. Gladstone*. Division—For, 54. Against, 4.

14. *Thurs.*—Registration of Voters (Ireland) Bill. Report. Bill read 3<sup>d</sup>.

15. *Fri.*—Supply: Forestry. Motion for a Select Committee, *Sir J. Lubbock*. Agreed to. House counted out.

18. *Mon.*—Supply. Question of Order raised on. *Mr. Slater-Booth*. Motion, That this House will immediately resolve itself into the Committee of Supply—Civil Service Estimates.

## MAY (continued).

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Bill. Brought in	21. Thurs.—East India Loan (£10,000,000) Bill. Read 2 <sup>o</sup> . Adjournment (Whitsuntide Recess). Debate thereon.
19. Tues.—House counted out at 6.15.	22. Fri.—Telegraph Acts Amendment Bill. Read 2 <sup>o</sup> .
20. Wed.—Registration (Occupation Voters) Bill. Lords Amendments considered.	

## JUNE.

4. Thurs.—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.	15. Mon.—Ditto, ditto. Parliamentary Elections Bill. Lords Amendments considered.
5. Fri.—Supply: Law, &c. (Ireland). Motion, Mr. T. D. Sullivan. House counted out.	Parliamentary Elections (Medical Relief) Bill, Mr. J. Collings. Brought in. House adjourned till Friday.
8. Mon.—Customs, &c., Bill. 2nd Reading. Amendment, Sir M. Hicks-Beach. Division—For, 252. Against, 234.	19. Fri.—House adjourned till Tuesday.
9. Tues.—House adjourned till Friday.	23. Tues.—House adjourned till to-morrow at 5 o'clock.
12. Fri.—Resignation of Ministers. Statement, Mr. Gladstone.	24. Wed.—New Writs for the New Ministers.
	25. Thurs.—Ditto, ditto.

## JULY.

6. Mon.—Parliamentary Oath (Mr. Bradlaugh). Resolution, Sir M. Hicks-Beach. Amendment, Mr. Hopwood. Division—For, 219. Against, 263. Resolution agreed to. Supply : Civil Service Estimates.	Pell. Division—For, 20. Against, 272. Bill committed.
7. Tues.—Orders of the Day. Priority to Government Orders on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Supply : Princess Beatrice Marriage Portion. Division—For, 153. Against, 32. Civil Service Estimates.	17. Fri.—Motion, Maamtrasna, &c., Murders, Mr. Parnell.
8. Wed.—Supply : Navy Estimates.	20. Mon.—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.
9. Thurs.—Ways and Means. Financial Statement, Sir M. Hicks-Beach. Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Read 2 <sup>o</sup> .	21. Tues.—Medical Relief Disqualification Removal Bill. On going into Committee. Amendment, Mr. Courtney. Division—For, 22. Against, 226. Bill committed.
10. Fri.—Destitute Children (Industrial Training). Motion, Mr. S. Smith.	22. Wed.—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.
13. Mon.—Supply : Army (Supplementary) Estimates, Mr. Secretary Smith. Medical Relief Disqualification Removal Bill, Mr. A. J. Balfour. Brought in.	23. Thurs.—Sergeant-at-Arms. Resolution on Retirement, Sir M. Hicks-Beach. Medical Relief Disqualification, &c., Bill. Report.
14. Tues.—Supply : Education Estimates, Mr. E. Stanhope.	24. Fri.—Supply : Civil Service Estimates. Secretary for Scotland Bill. Read 2 <sup>o</sup> .
15. Wed.—Supply : Civil Service Estimates.	27. Mon.—Supply : Army and Civil Service Estimates.
16. Thurs.—Customs, &c., Bill. Read 2 <sup>o</sup> . Medical Relief Disqualification Removal Bill, 2nd Reading. Amendment, Mr.	28. Tues.—Privilege. Speech of Mr. Bright. Motion, Mr. Callan. Supply : Civil Service Estimates.

## AUGUST.

3. Mon.—Ditto, ditto. 3rd Sitting. Bill reported. Secretary for Scotland Bill. Committee. Labourers (Ireland) Bill. Committee.	10. Mon.—Housing Working Classes (England) Bill, Sir R. Cross. Read 2 <sup>o</sup> . Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill. Committee.
4. Tues.—Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill. Read 2 <sup>o</sup> . Secretary for Scotland Bill. Reported.	11. Tues.—Housing Working Classes (England) Bill. Committee. Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill. The Report. Bill read 3 <sup>o</sup> .
5. Wed.—The Appropriation Bill. Read 3 <sup>o</sup> .	12. Wed.—Soudan Expedition. Vote of Thanks, Sir M. Hicks-Beach. Housing Working Classes (England) Bill. Report. Bill read 3 <sup>o</sup> . Labourers (Ireland) Bill. Lords' Amendments considered.
6. Thurs.—East India (Revenue Accounts) Statement, Lord R. Churchill. Criminal Law Amendment Bill. Report. 1st Debate.	14. Fri.—Prorogation.
7. Fri.—Ditto, ditto. 2nd Debate. Bill read 3 <sup>o</sup> .	

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